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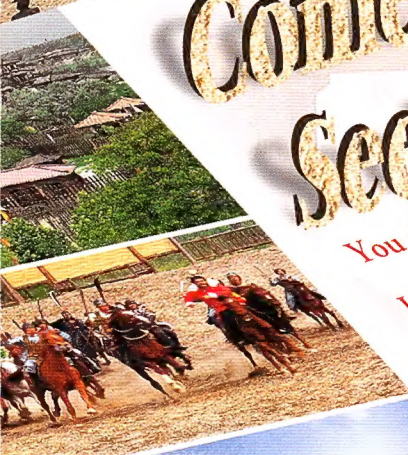
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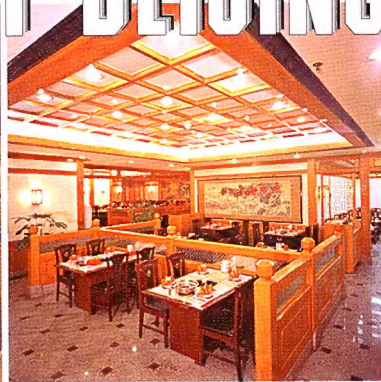
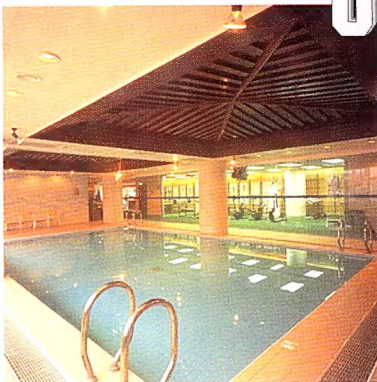
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Cover: Buddhist streamers on a Lhasa street (by Che Gang)



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Photos & article by Xie Guanghui

After visiting Lhasa in our last issue, we now lead you to see more of Tibet through three routes. Along the road to the world's highest peak, the Qomolangma, you will see the sacred lake Yamzho Yum; from Rongbuk Temple, you will see the golden morning rays touching the snow-capped Qomolangma, forming a breath-taking charming picture. In Nagqu, the highest town in the world, you will see the Tibetans celebrating their Horse-racing Festival. In Shannan, the origin of the Tibetan culture, you will see the first palace and the first temple of Tibet.

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A Journey to Chinese Ceramics Capitals

An American Learns Ceramics in Jingdezhen

Photos & article by Shan Xiaogang

Making My Own Pottery Plates

Photos & article by Mu Ren

China has long been closely related to the world of porcelain and pottery. A survey of the numerous major ceramics centres in the country will give you some basic ideas about the varied types of porcelain and pottery fired in different kilns. Jingdezhen, the world-famous "capital of porcelain", for example, can produce paper-thin lampshades as well as table sets, while Tangshan and Zibo are noted for their porcelain sculptures and artistic works.



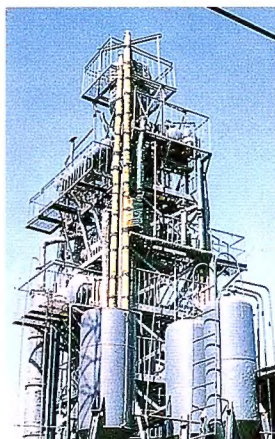
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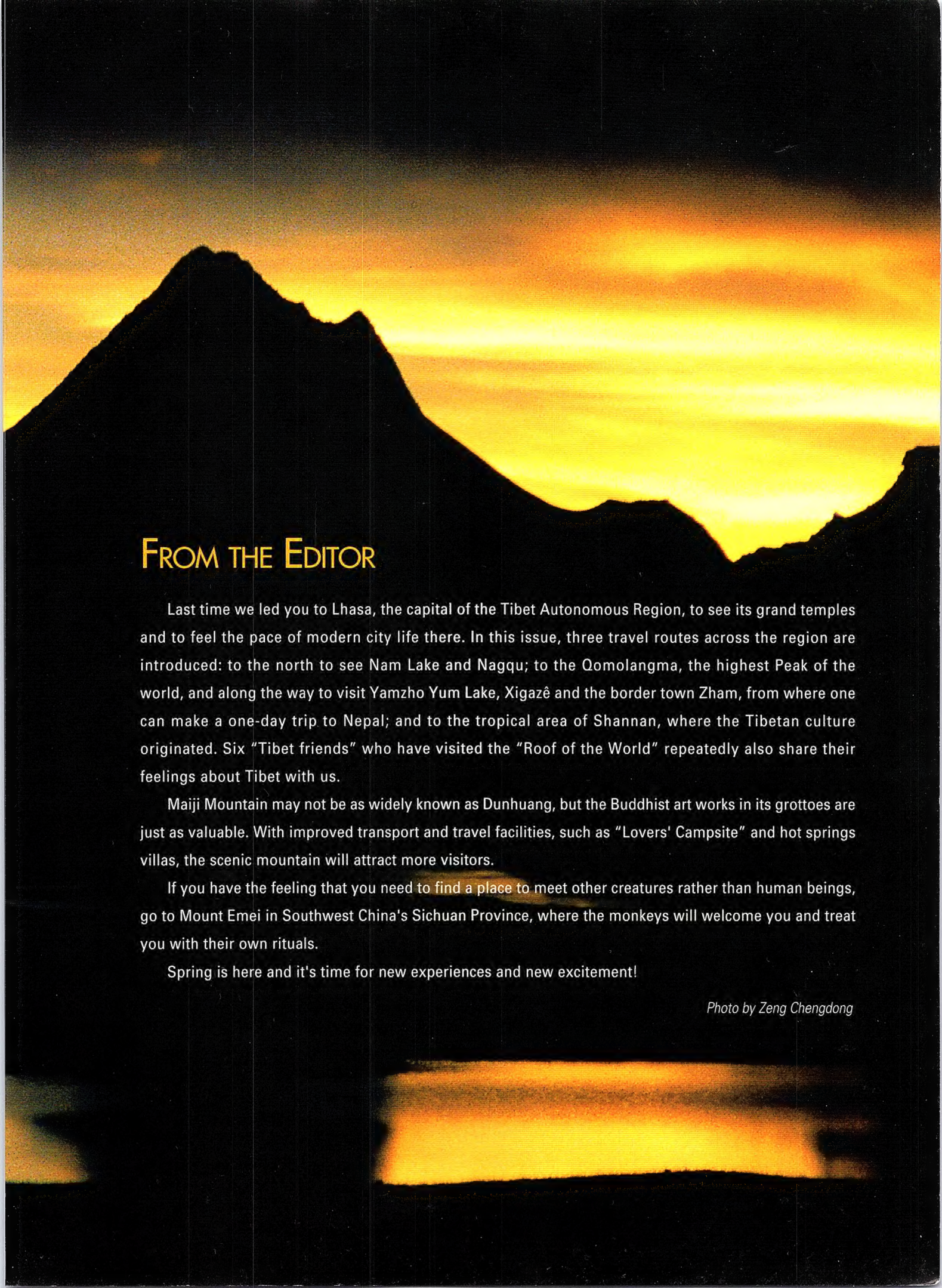
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FROM THE EDITOR

Last time we led you to Lhasa, the capital of the Tibet Autonomous Region, to see its grand temples and to feel the pace of modern city life there. In this issue, three travel routes across the region are introduced: to the north to see Nam Lake and Nagqu; to the Qomolangma, the highest Peak of the world, and along the way to visit Yamzho Yum Lake, Xigazê and the border town Zham, from where one can make a one-day trip to Nepal; and to the tropical area of Shannan, where the Tibetan culture originated. Six "Tibet friends" who have visited the "Roof of the World" repeatedly also share their feelings about Tibet with us.

Maiji Mountain may not be as widely known as Dunhuang, but the Buddhist art works in its grottoes are just as valuable. With improved transport and travel facilities, such as "Lovers' Campsite" and hot springs villas, the scenic mountain will attract more visitors.

If you have the feeling that you need to find a place to meet other creatures rather than human beings, go to Mount Emei in Southwest China's Sichuan Province, where the monkeys will welcome you and treat you with their own rituals.

Spring is here and it's time for new experiences and new excitement!

Photo by Zeng Chengdong



Culture / Wuxi



Clay Figurine Museum

Wuxi Huishan Clay Figurine Museum, China's first painted sculpture art museum, has been completed recently in Jiangsu Province's Wuxi City. This form of painted art began in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and became popular during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

With a history of more than 400 years, Huishan clay figurines represent the typical art of the locality. The museum is divided into four halls covering art treasures, contemporary works, demonstrations of how to make clay figurines, and folk arts. It is

1,800 square metres in size and over 1,000 pieces of art from the past centuries and modern times are on display.

Hotel / Hong Kong



New Regal Airport Hotel

With the move of the Hong Kong airport, the new Regal Airport Hotel has opened at the new Hong Kong International Airport. Directly connected to the airport's passenger terminal by a covered link-bridge, the Regal Airport Hotel provides a world of convenience — luxurious accommodation, a wide assortment of food and beverage outlets and impeccable service to the most discerning business and leisure travellers.

To celebrate its opening, Regal Airport Hotel is offering a series of discounted room packages to its guests, including a 50 percent discount offer on all categories of rooms and suites.



Travel Route / Fujian



Forest Tour in Fujian

Two travel routes featuring forests and natural scenery have been recommended in East China's coastal province of Fujian. One is from the Wuyi Mountain Nature Reserve to the Plum Mountain Nature Reserve, passing Shaowu, Taining and Guanzhi Mountain on the way. The other is along the coastline, starting from the Fuzhou National Forest Park, passing Fuqing, Pingtan Island, Hui'an and Dongshan to reach the Wanshi Botanical Garden in Xiamen.

Fujian Province has rich forest resources. Its forest coverage rate reaches 60 percent, the highest in the country. Among its over 1,000 species of woody plants, 45 are rare species. In its forests, 812 kinds of animals have been found. The province now has 15 nature reserves and 11 forest parks.

Environmental Protection



Gas Automobiles Promoted

The Chinese government recently chose nine cities or areas for the experiment to promote gas-powered automobiles. These include Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, Hainan Province, Xi'an, Harbin, Ürümqi, Shenzhen and Mianyang in Sichuan.

The experiments will be carried out from 2001 to 2005. Then the use of the new technology will be spread throughout the country. According to experience in other countries, taxis and buses will be the first potential gas users.

Automobile factories will directly produce gas-powered automobiles, with other types of automobiles being converted to gas operation. The pioneers of the new industry have been chosen as the First Automobile Group, Dongfeng Automobile Group, Nanjing Automobile Group, Jinan Heavy-duty Automobile Corporation, Tianjin Automobile Industry Corporation and Chang'an Alto Automobile Corporation.

Transport / Xinjiang



Highway to Lop Nur

A 60-kilometre-long highway passing through the southern edge of the Taklimakan Desert to reach the ancient town of Milan is under construction in Northwest China's Xinjiang Province. When completed this April, it will greatly help ease travel to this area, including the Lop Nur which is attracting an increasing number of visitors. Milan, a strategic place on the southern ancient Silk Road, was where Chinese monks stopped on their way to India to study Buddhism.





Monorail System Linking Attractions

The newly built elevated monorail Happy Line has become another tourist attraction in the Overseas Chinese Town Resort in Shenzhen. The 3.88-kilometre-long monorail system has seven stops. It links all the scenic spots and attractions in the area, including the Splendid China, China Folk Culture Villages, Window of the World, Huaxia Arts Centre, Shenzhen Bay Hotel, Harbour View Hotel, the seaside mangroves and the Happy Valley Tourist area.

Each with 24 seats, the carriage is installed with air-conditioning and a broadcasting system. Riding on the Happy Line, you can travel through the enchanting scenery of the Overseas Chinese Town Resort, have a distant view of Hong Kong at the other side of the Shenzhen Bay, and admire the natural beauty of the seaside mangroves and the migratory birds inhabiting them.

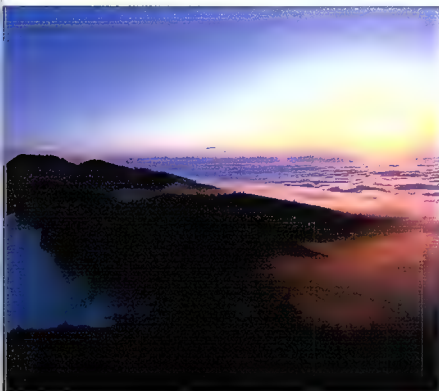


New Facilities on Mount Emei

Mount Emei in Southwest China's Sichuan Province is a famous scenic spot and Buddhist land. Now there are some new programmes that have been developed to make it even more attractive to tourists.

The newly finished single-rail-train takes visitors to the Ten-Thousand Buddha Summit, a kilometre from the Golden Summit, in seven minutes. Travelling along this line, visitors can see equally amazing but differently coloured scenes of the mountain in varied seasons of the year: a hundred species of azaleas in spring, the highland primeval vegetation in summer and autumn, and a silvery world in winter.

The ski centre at 2,300 metres above sea level is also completed. Skiing lovers can either ski down the slopes or try a high-speed snow slide. For those who come to Mount Emei to see the monkeys, it has become especially convenient. They do not need to climb all the way up the mountain to see these cute creatures — an ecological natural reserve for monkeys has been built at the foot of the mountain.



Food Cure for Insomnia

Doctors and patients have been trying various methods to cure insomnia, a health problem commonly suffered by many. Now some people believe that their sleeping problem can be solved by eating certain foods.

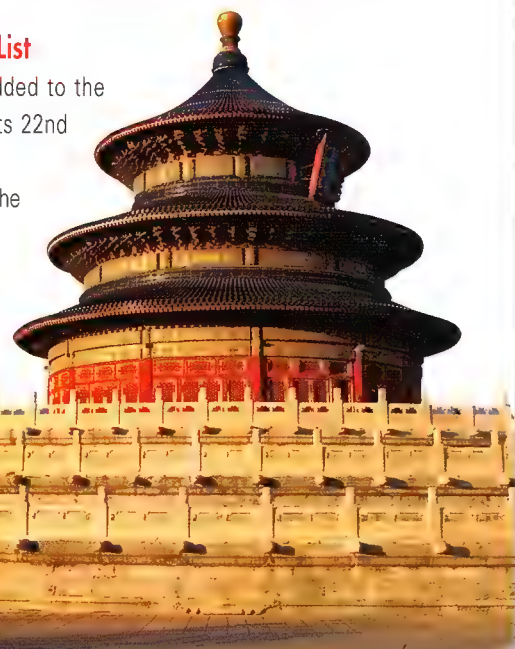
Fruit is listed at the top because, it is believed, the flavour of fruit helps calm the spirit. Besides eating them, one can also cut an apple or orange, or anything else, into pieces and put them by one's pillow. The pleasant smell will induce sleep quickly. Second, drinking a glass of hot milk before going to bed can also help one get into a sound sleep faster. This method is especially good for older people. Vinegar is also a good cure for insomnia. The method to take it is easy: put a spoonful of vinegar into a cup of cold water and drink it before bedtime. Also listed as a insomnia cure is millet. Having some millet gruel before going to bed will bring about pleasant dreams.



Summer Palace and Temple of Heaven Added on World Heritage List

The Summer Palace and the Temple of Heaven in Beijing have been added to the UNESCO World Heritage list by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee at its 22nd plenary session held in Japan on December 2, 1998.

The Summer Palace, located in the northwest suburbs of Beijing, was built in the 18th century during the Qing Dynasty to serve as the summer resort of the royal family. Endowed with the most wonderful natural environment and a vast expanse of water, it is the largest royal garden in the world. Tiantan, or the Temple of Heaven, is the world's largest altar. Built in 1420 during the Ming Dynasty, it was where the emperors prayed to the God of Heaven for good harvests.



Beach Weddings Popular in Qingdao

In the beautiful coastal city of Qingdao in Shandong Province, it has become very popular among young couples to have their weddings held on the beach. Many young people find the common way to celebrate the event — inviting relatives and friends to restaurants — too boring, and the fast development of the economy has made it possible for them to make other choices. Those who choose to get married on the beach say that the beach and the sea symbolise the gentle love between the newlyweds.

Statistics show that only 30 percent of young couples still celebrate their weddings at restaurants. While some have solemn ceremonies in churches, others may go climbing a mountain, which is believed to inspire the husband and wife to be able to get through all kinds of difficulties in life and work out their happiness together.

Direct Flight to Dêqên, the 'Shangri-La'

Dêqên in the northwest of Yunnan Province is believed by many to be the "Shangri-La", and a dreamland for tourists. At present, it takes two days to drive from Kunming, capital of Yunnan, to Dêqên. An airport is now under construction in this area, and when completed and put into operation later this year, visitors will be able to fly on a B737 from Kunming to the "Shangri-La". Meanwhile, roads and other tourist facilities will be improved so as to make Dêqên an upscale tourist area in five to 10 years.

More Tourists to Arba, Sichuan

Last year, about 350,000 tourists from home and abroad visited the Arba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture in Southwest China's Sichuan Province, a 46 percent rise over the previous year. Included in this area are such world-famous charming scenic spots as the national parks of Jiuzhaigou and Huanglong, and the Four Sisters Mountain Nature Reserve. There is also the Wolong Nature Reserve for the protection of the giant panda. Furthermore, the colourful customs of the Tibetans and the Qiangs also form a big attraction to tourists.

Expanding Waterways, Shanghai

Shanghai hopes to substantially increase its inland shipping, which already accounts for about one quarter of the city's cargo volume. New routes to the adjacent provinces of Jiangsu and Zhejiang will be created by expanding and dredging river courses.

Container services are a keystone of the project. In 2010, the equivalent of 1.2 million teu (20 ft equivalent units) is expected to be moving to and from the city on inland waterways. By 2005, Shanghai intends to have nearly 500 kilometres of inland routes suitable for ships up to 300 dead-weight tonnes.

New Tourist Project: Xiaolangdi on the Yellow River

The Xiaolangdi Tourist Area on the middle reaches of the Yellow River in Luoyang, Henan Province, is under construction. It features many scenic spots along the river and the Thousand Island Lake, a vast expanse of water formed by the Xiaolangdi Water Conservancy Project. When completed, the scenic area will consist of six major parts, including Mount Baiya, Mount Huanglu, Wangling Island and the Xiaolangdi and Xixiayuan reservoirs. So far, 41 domestic and overseas companies have invested in the construction of the tourist zone.

Yuan and Ming Tombs Discovered, Shandong

Two ancient tombs dating back to the Yuan and Ming dynasties have been discovered in the city of Heze, Shandong Province. Among the abundant relics unearthed are porcelain pots, bronze mirrors and funeral artefacts. Also considered as important treasures are the stone sculptures set in front of the tombs, featuring human images, sheep, tigers and horses, which were typical commemorative figures of the times. The discovery has provided valuable insights for archaeological research on the folk customs of the two dynasties.

Hotel Ready for the World Gardening Expo 99

While construction of the World Gardening Expo 99 exhibition sites are speeding up, hotels in Kunming are also preparing for exhibitors and visitors from around the world. Zhongyu Hotel is one of them.

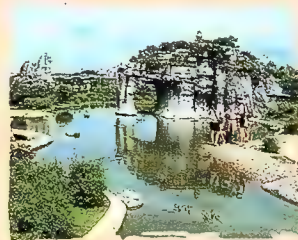
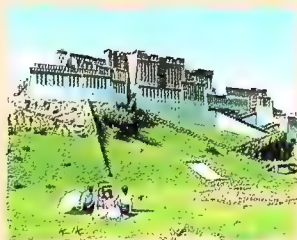
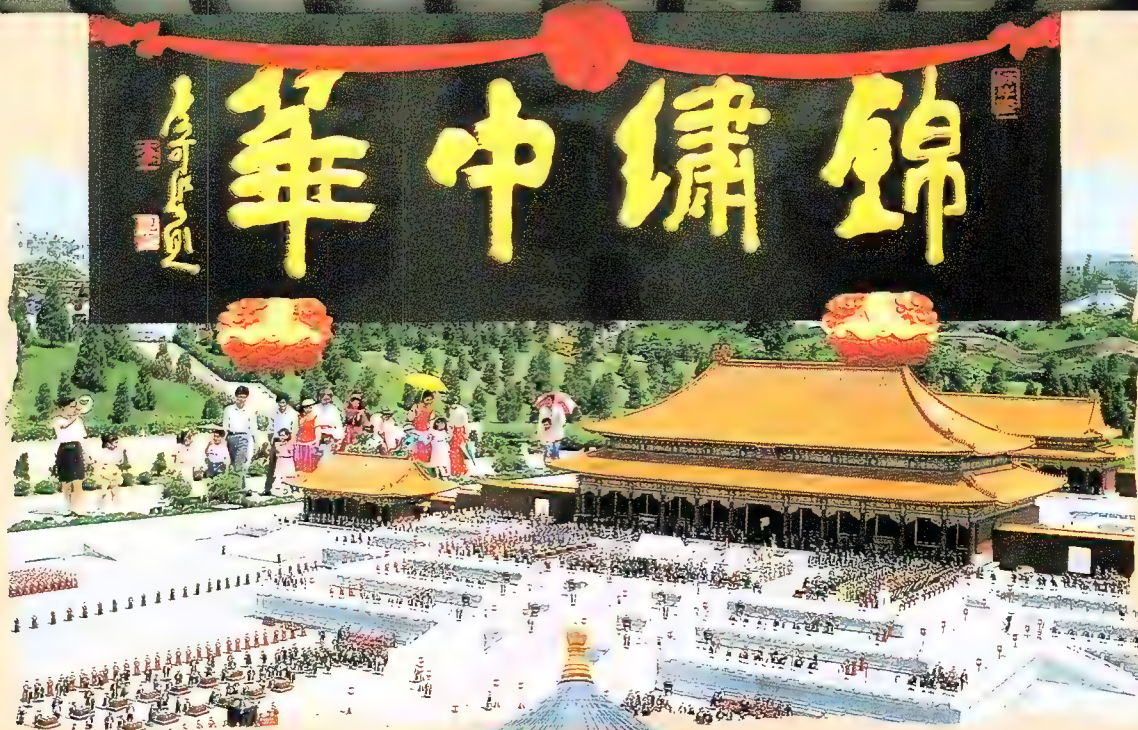
The four-star hotel is conveniently located adjacent to the Kunming International Trade Centre, and is only five minutes' drive from the airport and 10 minutes' from the railway station. Shuttle services to and from the city centre, the flower exhibition sites and the airport are provided, free of charge, to guests. The rooms are equipped with TV programmes in different languages, including Chinese, English, Japanese and Thai. Its restaurants offer both Western and Chinese dishes. Its bar, the Palm Tree Bay, with natural light, a charming waterfall and a live band, makes the guests feel at home and refreshed.

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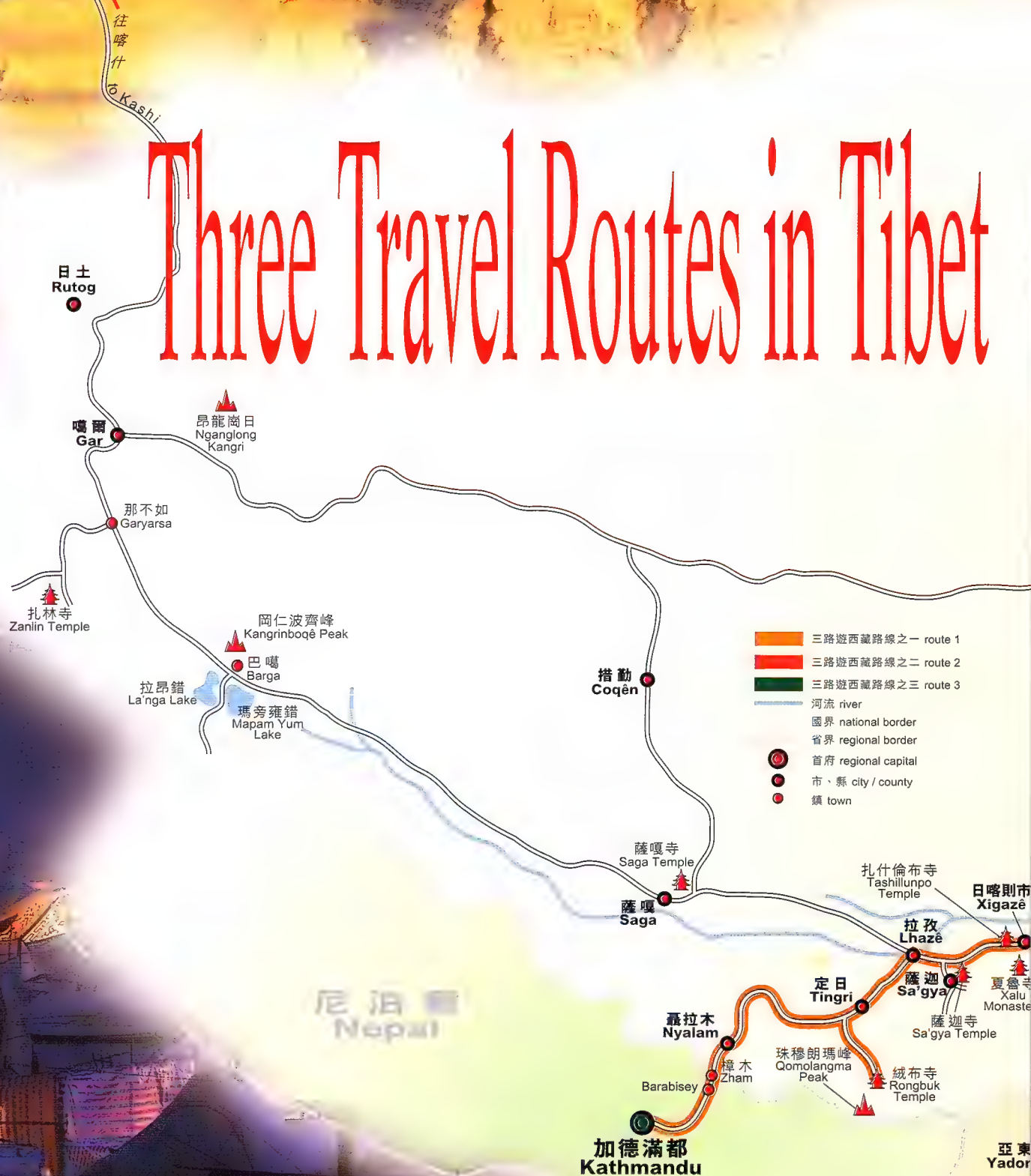
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Three Travel Routes in Tibet





格爾木
Golmud

唐古拉山口
Tanggula Pass

安多
Amdo

那曲
Nagqu

昌都
Qamdo

瀾滄江
Lancang River

怒江
Nujiang River

往成都

成都

往雲南

雲南

納木錯
Nam Lake

當雄
Damxung

拉薩市
Lhasa

林芝
Nyingchi

南迦巴瓦峰
Namjagbarwa Peak

墨脫
Medog

然烏
Rawu

察隅
Zayü

桑耶寺
Sanye Monastery

澤當
Zetang

乃東
Nedong

雅魯藏布江
Yarlung Zangbo River

扎囊
Zhanang

羊卓雍湖
Yamzho Yum Lake

琼結
Qonggyai

浪卡子
Nagarzê

貢嘎
Gonggar

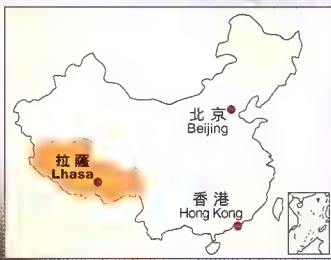
白居寺
Pelcho Monastery

康馬
Kangmar

錯那
Cona

印度
India

緬甸
Myanmar





THREE TRAVEL ROUTES IN TIBET, PART 1

The Qomolangma

Photos and article by Xie Guanghui

Lhasa • Yamzho Yum Lake • Gyangzê • Xigazê • Qomolangma • Zham • Barabisey, Nepal



After a stay of two days in Lhasa I no longer gasped for breath going up or down stairs, and my thoughts began to turn to a visit to see the Qomolangma. Tourists staying in the same Banak Shol Hotel said that the best place to see Mount Qomolangma is the Rongbuk Temple in Tingri County. At 5,100 metres above sea level, it is the highest temple in the world and only 25 kilometres from Qomolangma Peak as the crow flies.

They also told me that I could stay at the Rongbuk Temple for the night to see the sunrise, but I must bring enough warm clothes because it was very cold up there. I was quite moved when they warmly offered me advice. It was especially reassuring since this was my first trip to a high altitude and I was not sure I could handle it.

I also learned that there would be many places to see on my way to the Qomolangma, and that I could go on a cross-border tour to the town of Barabisey in Nepal.

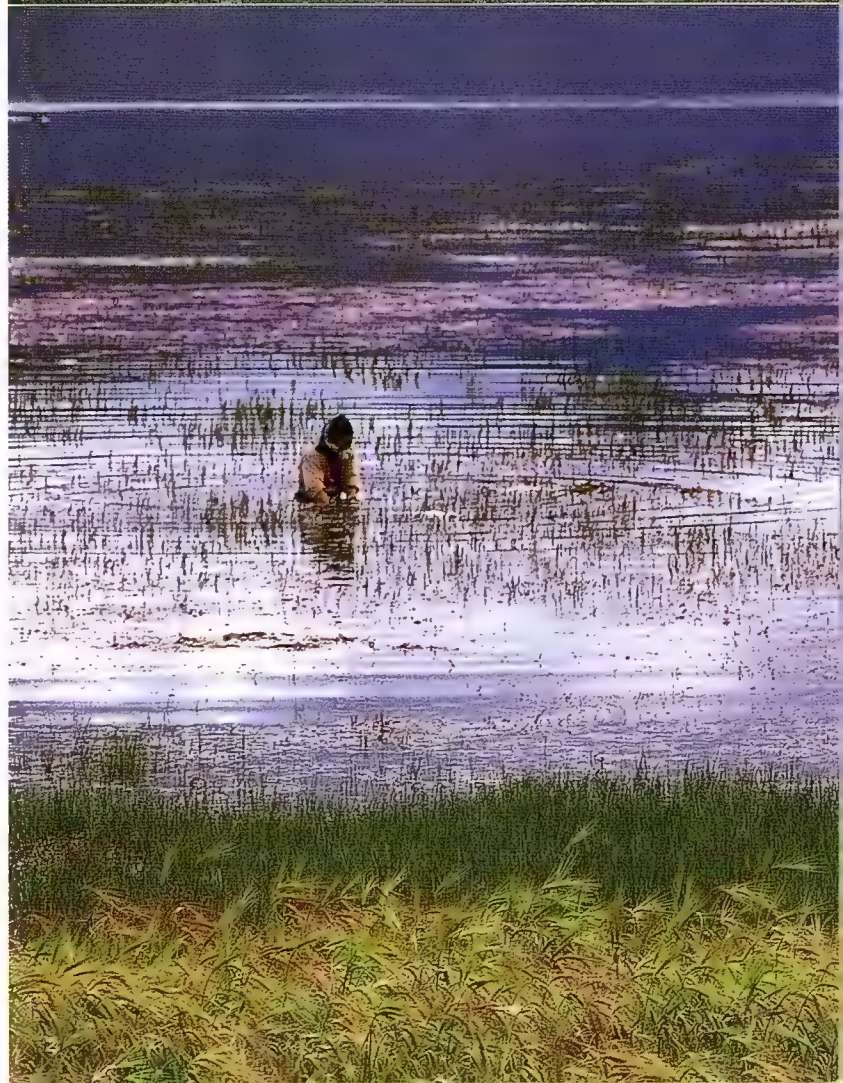
As I listened to them, I started itching to get on my way. I needed a good motor vehicle, of course. Just as people become physically weak on a high altitude, so will a motor vehicle lose its power.

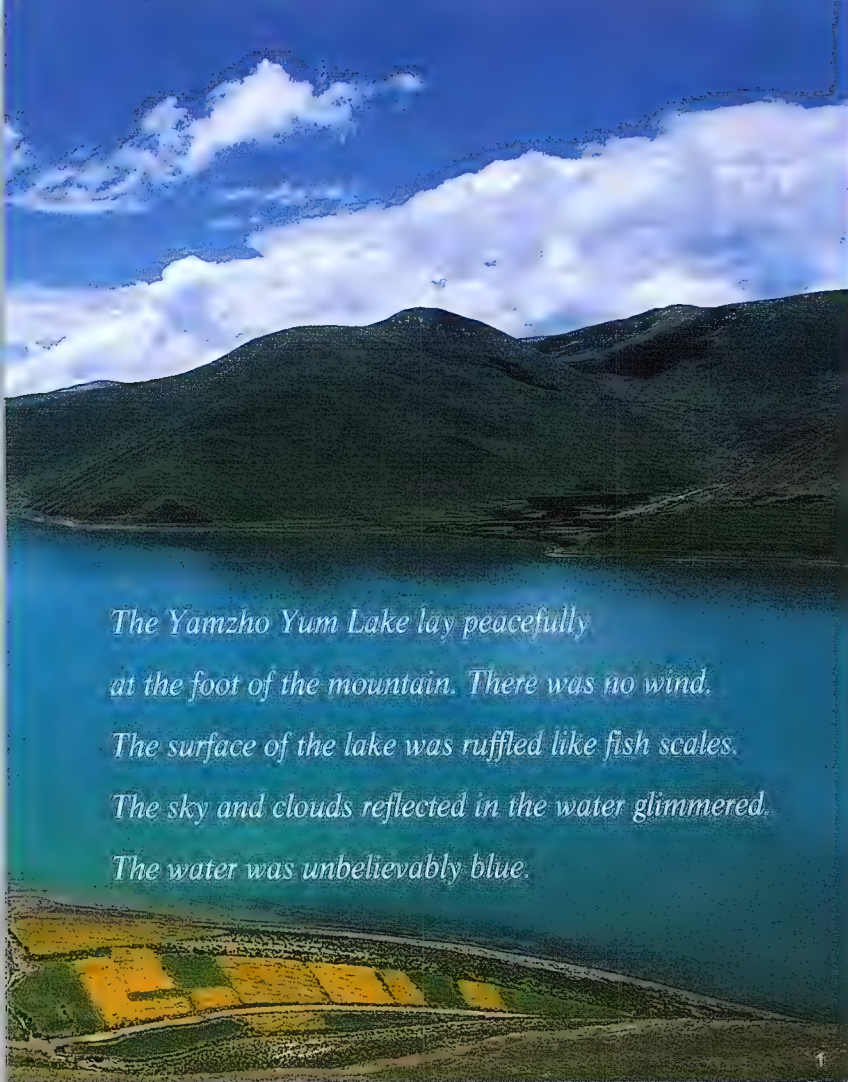
LOOKING DOWN AT YAMZHO YUM LAKE

As I pushed open the window at six in the morning, I found stars still in the sky. My driver, Pudanzhen, was already waiting at the hotel door, pacing to and fro in the cold. We loaded the luggage into a spotlessly clean, dark grey Toyota 4500cc jeep which still had the smell of a new vehicle; the odometer showing 31,000 kilometres was the proof, and reassurance to me.

Our headlights cast two strong beams in the morning light. The street lights flew past us like meteors as we sped out of town, heading south along the asphalt road that hugged the Lhasa River. The grey-white water of the river hurtles along, eventually draining into the Yarlung Zangbo River.

When the orange morning sun had reached the treetops, we were already crossing the great bridge at Qūxū that spanned the torrential Yarlung Zangbo River. Our car turned off onto a bumpy road, shifted gears and accelerated to climb up the 5,400-metre-high Gangbala Mountain. The jeep seemed to lose power as it chugged up the mountain at an ever decreasing speed. When we reached the pass at the top of the mountain, with the bright sun shining down, we found a rope tied between two piles of Mani stones (stones engraved with sacred invocations). The colourful pennants and white *hatas* on the rope flapped in the wind and formed a festive archway against the azure sky. Pudanzhen finally lifted his foot from the pedal, waved his right hand and shouted, "Jiji!





*The Yamzho Yum Lake lay peacefully
at the foot of the mountain. There was no wind.
The surface of the lake was ruffled like fish scales.
The sky and clouds reflected in the water glimmered.
The water was unbelievably blue.*



Sousou!" which meant the god is victorious.

Once through the pass, our eyes were immediately arrested by Yamzho Yum Lake. It was really beautiful! Pudanzhen pulled up the hand brake and said, "Go and have a look. Many of the best photographs of Yamzho Yum Lake were taken from here."

When we looked down, we found that the lake lay peacefully at the foot of the mountain. There was no wind. The surface of the lake was ruffled like fine fish scales. The sky and clouds reflected in the water glimmered. There were deep and shallow places in the lake, but all the water was blue, unbelievably blue.

"This is not the colour of water," I was puzzled. "No. It is heaven made," Pudanzhen said. "There are few dust particles in the air on the high plateau. The sky appears very blue. When it is reflected in the lake, the refraction reduces its brightness and makes it look bluer. In fact, all the lakes on the high plateau are like this."

Yamzho Yum Lake is one of the three great sacred lakes in Tibet. I was told that the Sandin Temple on the southern lake shore is a temple of the Gejol (White) Sect of Tibetan Buddhism. The Living Buddha in the temple is a woman named Duoji Pam, the 12th woman Living Buddha in the temple. It was truly regrettable that we could not even see the temple buildings on the opposite shore. When we drove to the lake side, I tasted the water in the lake. It was cool, slightly bitter and alkaline.

Previous page: The Qomolangma Peak in dusk, viewed from the Rongbuk Temple

1. The Yamzho Yum Lake is one of the three sacred lakes in Tibet. At 4,400 metres above sea level, it covers 700 square kilometres.
2. The melting snow on the mountains surrounding it is the source of the lake's water. Without an exit, the lake water remains the same level as long as the balance between the inflow and vaporisation is maintained.
3. Yamzho Yum means "gem on the upper pastureland". Most Tibetans living around the lake are herdsmen.







MANY BUDDHIST SECTS IN ONE TEMPLE

We arrived at the ancient town of Gyangzê in the afternoon. Pudanzhen parked at the hotel and said, "Have a good time. We're going to Xigazê tomorrow." He went to see a friend and I took a stroll.

The Pelcho Monastery rested on a small greyish black hill in the distance. The temple's main hall and Kumbum Pagoda stand encircled by a reddish-brown wall which snaked its way up and down the hill like the Great Wall. The imposing pagoda glittered in the setting sun.

The Pelcho Monastery was first built in 1418 by two of its abbots. There were originally 16 courtyards, where the White, Red, Yellow and Sagya sects of Tibetan Buddhism used to engage in their respective religious activities in the same temple. This was a very rare phenomenon in Tibet. I went first to the main hall and walked around the eight-metre-high copper statue of Sakyamuni enshrined there. The statue is said to have been cast with 15 tons of copper. During the casting, it was found that the statue was larger than its intended niche, and so the niche had to be enlarged.

Next I went to see the Kumbum Pagoda, which is a Bodhi pagoda of nine storeys. Like most Buddhist pagodas, each of the storeys rests on an octagonal seat. A winding staircase inside the pagoda leads up to the top storey. There are 77 closely arranged niches on each storey with a image of the Buddha in each. The walls and ceilings are covered with murals depicting the Buddha's life story. One mural depicting the Fifth Dalai Lama visiting Emperor Shunzhi of the Qing Dynasty is as lively as pictures of the Joyful Buddha.

1. The gate of the Kumbum Pagoda's top floor is beautifully decorated with art works in Indian and Nepalese styles.
2. The magnificent Pelcho Monastery
3. Pelcho Monastery was built in 1418. Originally, in its 16 courtyards, different sects of the Tibetan Buddhism engaged in their respective religious activities.
4. Outside a shop in a Gyangzê street



FILM INSPIRES VISIT TO TIBET

The rugged rocks of the Zongshan Mountain were dyed crimson by the setting sun. A group of white-washed buildings standing on the cliff top and encircled by a wall looked like an ancient castle overlooking the entire town. Among the buildings is the Museum of Resistance Against British Aggression. In the mid-19th century, the British army sent an expedition to capture Gyangzê. The local Tibetans, armed with swords, spears and ancient firearms, repulsed the invaders. Despite British army reinforcements and cannon fire, the Tibetan army fought valiantly and inflicted great damage. Out of food and water, the Tibetans sneaked a warrior down to the valley on a rope for provisions. Even with their ammunition dump destroyed by British cannon, the Tibetan soldiers still fought for three days and nights, before they were eventually overcome. Some fighters, refusing to live in disgrace, committed suicide by jumping off the cliff.

On top of the Zongshan Mountain, I met two women teachers from Beijing. They told me they had come because they had seen the film *Red River Valley*. The film has undoubtedly given great publicity to Tibet even though the story it tells is far different from historical facts.

THE FAMOUS TASHILHUNPO TEMPLE

As we drove into the town of Xigazê, the distant golden pinnacles of the Tashilhunpo Temple appeared at the foot of a hill. The annual ceremony for sunning the pictures of the Trikala Buddha on the Buddha-Displaying Terrace is held from the 14th to 16th day of the fifth month in the Tibetan calendar. It's a pity we missed it.

The Tashilhunpo is the most famous temple in Tibetan hinterland. Historical records of Tibet say that the Tashilhunpo Temple was built by Gedun Drub, the First Dalai Lama and the senior disciple of Tsong Khapa. With a river in front and a mountain behind, the temple is known for its imposing halls and magnificent Buddhist statues. It is where the Panchen Lama is incarnated and monks are initiated after completion of their studies. Tashilhunpo holds the highest position among the four great temples of Lamaism, or Yellow Sect of Tibetan Buddhism — the other three being Drepung, Gandain and Sera — probably due to its close association with both the Dalai and Panchen Lamas.

In the shrine of the Western Mausoleum is a full-length gilded statue of the Tenth Panchen Lama.

Because he had made an extraordinary contribution to Tibet, the government allocated 64.06 million yuan to construct this gold-plated burial dagoba.



1. The splendid golden niche of the Tenth Panchen Lama in the Western Mausoleum
2. The Tenth Panchen Lama's dagoba was built with 64.06 million yuan allocated from the government.





1. The Tashilhunpo Temple enjoys the highest position among the major temples of the Yellow Sect of the Tibetan Buddhism.
2. Lama students in heated discussion in one of the four Buddhism institutes in Tashilhunpo Temple
3. Adding more butter to the lamps in the Tashilhunpo
4. Coming to pray in the temple is an important part of the local people's daily life.



The hall on the western side is a five-storey structure about 30 metres in height. Enshrined in the hall is the 26.2-metre-high, gilded bronze statue of Maitreya Buddha, the largest of its kind in the country. One has to climb up the stairs to see the details of the different parts of the statue. The golden hat on the Buddha's head is inlaid with pearls and gems. The sparkling diamond set between his eyebrows is as large as a walnut. The whole statue is inlaid with 30 diamonds, each the size of a broad bean, more than 300 pearls and as many as 1,000 pieces of coral, amber and turquoise. Buddhists believe that after 500 million years, Maitreya, the Future Buddha, will emerge.

DONATING AT THE DAGOBA

Inside the temple's Western Mausoleum was the gilded burial dagoba of the Tenth Panchen Lama. Sitting in a niche is his full-length gilded statue. When the Tibetans die, there are four forms of burial — dagoba, sky, water and earth. The burial in a dagoba is the highest in status, and only the Dalai Lama is buried in a golden dagoba. A lama standing near me said that because the Tenth Panchen Lama had done so much for Tibet, the state allotted 64.06 million yuan for the construction of this gold-plated dagoba, including the large quantity of gold and gems used. I was surprised to find that quite a few Tibetans, after touching the seat of the dagoba with their heads, took a one-yuan note out of their pocket, placed it on the seat and took back change of 90 cents. The lama explained to me that donation was based on what one could afford.

GYELTSSEN NORBU, THE REINCARNATION OF THE TENTH PANCHEN LAMA

On the western side of Xigazê is the Panchen Lama's Summer Palace, which occupies about 50,000 square metres of land and is planted with many kinds of fruit and flowering trees. The Eleventh Panchen, named Gyeltsen Norbu, is a boy from an ordinary herdsman family of northern Tibet. He is nine years old this year. Three years ago, that is, six years after the Tenth Panchen Lama's death, the secret search for the boy who became the reincarnation of the Tenth Panchen began. The search was based on the lama's gesture when he died and on the conclusions drawn from divinations. When the searchers passed by Gyeltsen Norbu's door, the boy said to them, "I know you." The searchers, pleasantly surprised, then had a rest and a meal in the boy's home. While eating, the boy held the bowl with baked barley flour in the hands of one of



the searchers and said, "I also have a bowl like this one. It is in the Tashilhunpo Temple." Later, when lots were drawn from a gold vase in front of the statue of Sakyamuni, Gyeltsen Norbu was chosen by the Buddha from among several boy candidates as the reincarnation of the Tenth Panchen.

The living quarters and office of the Eleventh Panchen Lama were arranged as they were in the days of the Tenth, except for the toys and a small bicycle.

Soon after leaving Xigazê, the road became rough again. After driving past the county seat of Lhazê, heavy rain pelted down on the windows like a water curtain, reducing visibility almost to zero. All the way I was wondering how on earth we could see the Qomolangma Peak (Mt. Everest) tomorrow.

FOSSIL SEA ROCKS FOR SALE

It was totally dark when we pulled off the highway and reached the Qomolangma Hotel in Tingri. Our headlights highlighted the seven or eight boys, soaked through, rushing up to our jeep, each holding a cloth bag above his head. They swarmed around the jeep before it stopped completely and knocked on the window, saying, "Rocks, rocks for sale...." "What rocks?" I asked as I opened the door. The boys quickly emptied their bags on the ground. With a torch, I looked at them and saw that each rock had clear whorls on it, like those of a sea conch. Pudanzhen said that these were fossils from the sea bottom dug up from the mountains. Billions of years ago, this area was part of the ancient Mediterranean Sea. Later, as a result of the movement of the earth's crust, the bottom of the sea rose steadily higher and became the roof of the world. It seemed unimaginable to find priceless treasures so easily. The small ones were sold for one yuan each, big ones two yuan, and a more or less undamaged one cost five yuan. I gladly bought a big pile and the boys' faces beamed with



happiness and excitement.

WRITING POSTCARDS

The Qomolangma Hotel had no telephone but there was a mail box at the service desk. I bought two dozen postcards and intended to write and post them before going to bed, but soon found that I could not write at all. The air was thin at this high altitude and my brain was not functioning properly. No matter how I tried to keep my eyes open, the heavy drowsiness was overwhelming; I finally gave up.

The hotel attendant knocked on my door before daylight. "Get up. Get up. The day is fine," he shouted in an alarmingly loud voice. But we were grateful; this meant a good day for photography.

Pudanzhen switched off the engine when we were still a considerable distance from the checkpoint and allowed the jeep to glide down to it. He suggested we speak softly so as not to annoy the inspectors. A barrier extended from the inspection office like a long-armed crane across the highway. All was quiet as Pudanzhen walked up to the window and knocked lightly twice. A

1. At 5,100 metres above sea level, Rongbuk is the highest temple in the world. (by Zeng Chengdong)
2. The Himalayas viewed from Tingri (by Zeng Chengdong)
3. In late summer, herders begin to move to lower pastureland.
4. Zealous foreign visitors



*In the thin air, my brain could not function properly.
I intended to write some postcards,
but was seized by a heavy drowsiness after finishing
only a few of them.*



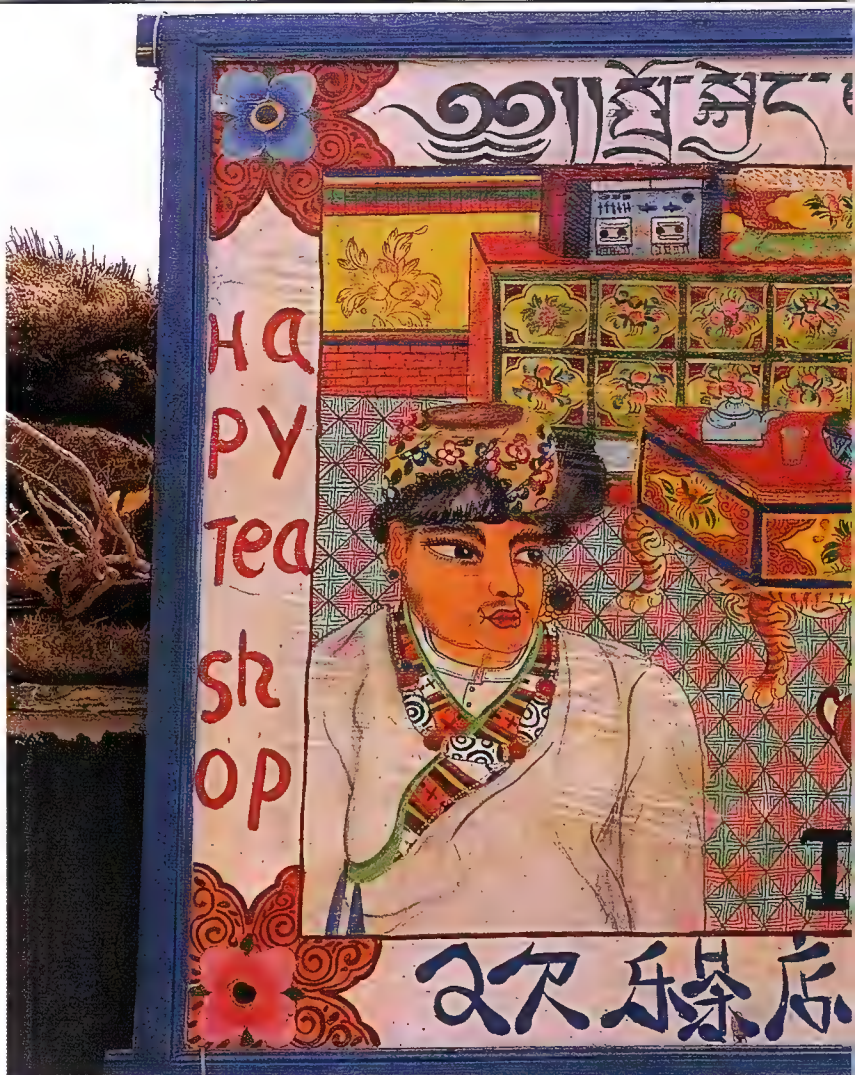
young inspector answered and came out, with sleepy eyes, buttoning up his coat. "Where are you going so early in the morning?" he questioned in a not very friendly voice. "To Rongbuk Temple to see the Qomolangma," Pudanzhen answered meekly. "Can you see it in this weather?" He asked, again without lifting his eyes from our passes that he was examining. "We'll try our luck," I said with a smile.

The barrier bar swung up in a flash and Pudanzhen breathed a sigh of relief. The lonely checkpoint soon disappeared from our rear-view mirror.

QOMOLANGMA NOWHERE TO BE SEEN

From the China-Nepal Highway, we turned off into the Qomolangma Nature Reserve. Alarmed grey wild rabbits jumped back from the roadside now and then, and brownish grey marmots peeped at us vigilantly from behind rocks. When we reached the top of a mountain, we could see the mountains in the distance enshrouded in mist. "When the weather is fine, you can see the Qomolangma from here," Pudanzhen said. As we drove straight down, our view was further obscured and the air became more moist. At the bottom of the valley, we saw a small river roaring in front of us. Pudanzhen's face blanched. "Too bad. The bridge has been washed away by floodwater. We can't get to the temple," he said. We walked over to see the bridge pier that had broken in the middle. Several young men who were piling up stones to repair the bridge on the other side of the river laughed and said, "Fly over in your jeep. Haven't you seen how Ke Shouliang flew over the Yellow River in a car?" I was very much disappointed.

Initially the 200-kilometre route from Tingri to Nyalam was plateau scenery, but after passing Nyalam the highway started a quick descent and the desolate steppe changed suddenly into forests. With the continuing drop in altitude,





the scenery changed accordingly. At first, the valley was crowded with tall Himalayan firs, their crowns forming an undulating sea. They were gradually replaced by golden white birches and hemlocks. Down at Zham, 1,800 metres above sea level, there were broadleaf trees everywhere, and temperature was as warm as spring.

CROSSING INTO NEPAL FOR A DAY

At the Zham Hotel where we stayed, we found that we could have a one-day tour to Barabisey in Nepal. The following morning, after the hotel had applied for temporary border passes for us, we hired a local Sherpa man, who spoke both the Nepalese and Tibetan languages, as our guide. Pudanzhen thus became the middleman. Before crossing the border, I exchanged 1,000 yuan for 12,000 Nepalese rupees.

After crossing the Friendship Bridge, our guide pointed to the left, guiding Pudanzhen to the opposite, and correct, side of the road for driving in Nepal. As we drove on, more and more subtropical plants appeared and the dark-skinned local people went about in sandals and light

1. This restaurant in the old town of Tingri is favoured by tourists.
2. An advertising board erected on the China-Nepal Highway
3. The North and South temples of the Sagya Temple are separated on two opposite slopes in a valley. Sagya means "white earth", so the houses are either white or grey in colour.
4. After a visit to the market in Tingri



clothing. Occasionally, we saw a few buses, all decorated in pleasantly gorgeous colours. It was alarming to see that while the buses drove along a zigzagging highway, even their roofs were crowded with passengers, and that the buses had no rear-view mirrors. I could not believe it when I heard that the mirrors had been removed for use at home. On the way, I saw drivers backing up several times, and every time, the man beside the driver had to jump down to give signals to the driver by banging the body of the bus.

When we approached the checkpoint at the town of Barabisey, a soldier examined our passes and then made a smoking gesture. When I handed him a cigarette, he motioned, "OK." At this moment, an officer came out of the building and said, "No. No." He beckoned the guide over and said something to him. The guide returned, saying the officer wanted 10 yuan. I produced a 10-rupee Nepalese banknote, and the officer, obviously displeased, shook his head and said in rudimentary Chinese, "Renminbi." When he had put the yuan into his pocket he cordially raised his hand to wave us on.



1. At Zham, 1,800 metres above sea level, the weather is as warm as spring and the trees are all broad-leaved.
2. A happy picnic in the country
3. An electronic game shop at Zham
4. A huge tent is needed for a construction site during the raining season at Zham.

The snow-capped Qomolangma, bathed in the golden rays of the morning sun, presented such a beautiful, breath-taking picture that I had to draw a few deep breaths to calm myself before pressing the shutter.



The buildings of the town of Barabisey are scattered on the banks of a small river. The concrete bridge spanning the river is said to have been built with Chinese aid. We walked around in the streets and found that most daily items in the shops were from China and sold at slightly higher prices than in Tibet. There were French perfumes, relatively cheaper than other Asian cities. I bought a few cassette tapes of local music as souvenirs of my visit across the border. The most interesting experience, however, was eating rice with one's fingers. After each of us had ordered, we began to help ourselves with the right hand (the left hand is reserved for use in the toilet). We remembered this rule at first, but as we were clumsy, we forgot all about it and used both hands. The proprietor could not help smiling furtively at us.

It takes only one hour to drive from Barabisey to Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. But, eager to see the Qomolangma Peak, we hurried back to Zham that evening.

TO THE QOMOLANGMA AGAIN

Drivers coming from Mount Qomolangma brought the good news that the bridge had been repaired. We set out from Zham in the early morning and reached Rongbuk



Temple in the afternoon. Although the sky was blue above, there were still thick clouds over the mountain as if drawn by a powerful magnetic field. Seeing the clouds did not disperse when the sun was going down, I had grave doubts about viewing Qomolangma the next day. We stayed at the Rongbuk Temple that night. The wind roared outside like growling dogs and howling wolves. The terrifying sound, however, was pleasing too, because it meant that the wind should drive away the clouds.

Before daylight, we started up the mountain, braving a bitterly cold wind. Hardly had I made a few steps upward when I started to gasp and could not lift my feet. I found my heart was beating at double speed. As I went further up, I felt as if my heart was going to explode. When I reached a ridge with a good view at last, I pulled the zipper of my overcoat all the way up. My teeth chattered with cold. It was a dramatic change from the previous day's weather.

As the stars began to disappear, the grey sky turned red, then orange as the sun pierced through the clouds. To ensure good photos, I brought specially a Nikon FM-2 all-mechanical camera and a tripod. Through the viewfinder, I saw the golden rays of the morning sun had just touched the snow-capped peak of Mount Qomolangma. The contrast of cold and warm colours presented a beautiful, breath-taking picture. My heart beat fast and I had to calm myself before pressing the shutter.

After returning to Lhasa, I began to wonder why my film never ended. With fear I opened the back of the camera and almost fainted, for the film had not caught on the sprockets and all 36 pictures were exposed on the same frame. What a shame!

1. Foreign visitors can leave China from the entry port at Zham.
2. This Nepalese boy is going to the market to sell his chicken.
3. Visitors and local residents mingling together on a Barabisey street
4. Gambling, the ancient Nepalese way
5. A street scene of Barabisey, Nepal



सन्तापिलज
रेण्डुर्य
सि.पा. बाह्रिसे कत पाले



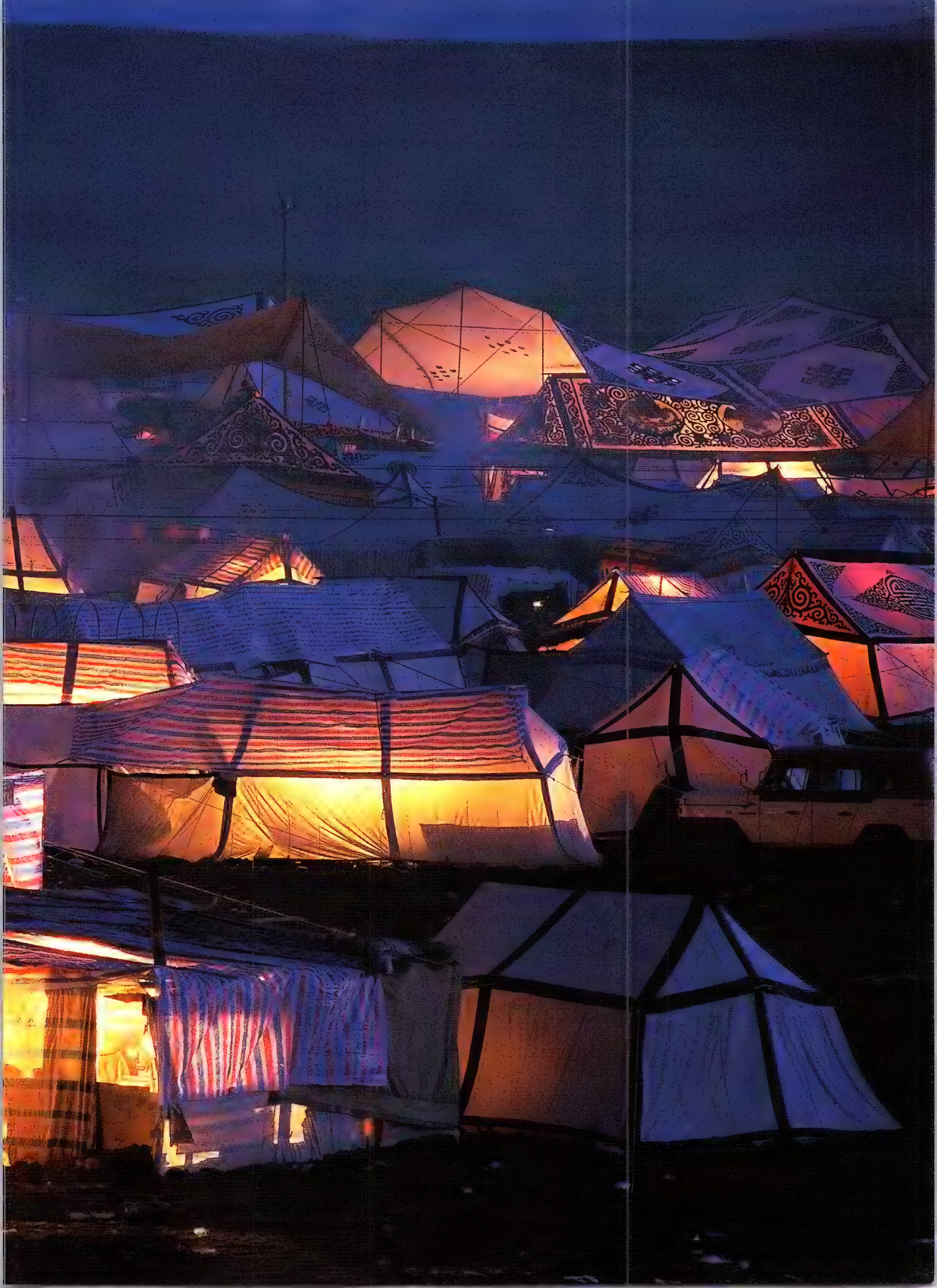
THREE TRAVEL ROUTES IN TIBET, PART 2

Going North to Nagqu

Photos and article by Xie Guanghui

Lhasa — Nanga Township — Nam Lake — Nagqu





The Toyota jeep left Lhasa and sped north along the Qinghai-Tibet Highway. There were five of us in the jeep: Pingcuo, the driver; Shi Zhiqiang, a scholar-like gentleman from Shenzhen; Xu Fang, a young woman from Xiamen; Zhu Ling, a recent graduate from Chinese University of Hong Kong who spends all her holidays travelling in China; and myself. Shi and Xu had met when they were both travelling on a bus from Golmud, Qinghai, to Lhasa. Zhu Ling was a long-time *China Tourism* reader so she and I had a lot to discuss.

THE HARVEST FESTIVAL

As we drove past Nanga Township in Doilungdêqên County, the barley fields on both sides of the highway swayed in the wind. There was a light cloud of dust in the distance and the sound of horses' hooves.

"Is that a horse-racing fair?" I asked excitedly. "No. It's the *Ongkor* Festival," Pingcuo answered with surety.

We unanimously decided to go and have a look, so the car turned off the highway and drove towards the sound.

Ongkor in the Tibetan language means "parading around the fields". It is a popular festival in the villages in the middle reaches of the Yarlung Zangbo River and on both banks of the Lhasa River. Pingcuo told us that the same festival is also held in other places, such as Lhazê and Tingri, where it is called *Yaji*, meaning "pleasant summer". In the semi-agricultural and semi-pastoral area around the Gangbubala Snow Mountain, it is called *Bangsang*, meaning "auspicious pasture". It is a celebration held at the beginning of the harvest season.

We could not believe our eyes. Some of the equestrians were dressed in Qing-dynasty army uniforms. Some wore a robe of yellow brocade and a round Mongolian hat. They took part in the competitions on beautifully decorated horses. There were long and short-distance races, large and small-scale races as well as demonstrations of picking up a white *hata* or coin from the ground while on horseback. Villagers lined both sides of the race course to watch the performances. There were shooting targets made of ox skin erected at regular intervals. As the riders galloped past the targets, they let go of the reins and shot at the targets with guns or arrows. The first three winners were awarded with Yunnan brick tea.

A local man invited us to stay and watch the *Guojie* party in the evening, when villagers would gather around a bonfire. Each participant would place a handful of firewood in the bonfire and pour a pot of barley wine into the nearby large bronze vat before joining the circle to dance. They would also sing together while young women ladled wine out to each of the dancers. With regret, we





continued on our journey.

After eating lunch at Damxung, we turned off the Qinghai-Tibet Highway and began to climb the Nyainqêntangha Mountains. As we circled up the mountain, the temperature dropped steadily. On the way, we saw corpses of yaks by the roadside. Pingcuo looked grave. He said that in the big snowstorm in northern Tibet last year, the wild antelopes and Mongolian gazelles escaped the snow and gathered in groups on the asphalt surface of the Qinghai-Tibet Highway. The larger animals, such as the horses and yaks, dispersed. The sheep froze to death around the yurts. Fortunately, the air force of the People's Liberation Army sent helicopters to drop medicine, food and other emergency materials in the stricken area in time; the government of the autonomous region sent bulldozers to clear the roads. There was not one human casualty reported. It was an amazing feat of rescue work.

Previous page: During the annual Horse-racing Festival, over 1,000 tents are set up on the grassland.

1. A rider shoots his arrow towards one of the yak skin targets which set at regular intervals along the race course.
2. Villagers from afar gather to watch horse-racing programmes.
3. Lending a helpful hand
4. Ready for the racing! Some participants are in ancient Qing-dynasty uniforms or Mongolian costumes.



TENT SCHOOL ON THE STEPPE

After climbing over the Naked mountain pass, it was downhill all the way. Unfolding before our eyes was a vast steppe surrounded by mountains. Nam Lake, its surface glistening in the sunlight, appeared to be at the far west end of the steppe. Tents were scattered here and there on the grassland. "All the white canvas tents were bought from the cities," the driver said. "They are actually not very good. The herdsman still prefer yurts of yak skin which have good ventilation, and are waterproof and warm in winter." As he spoke, he pulled up in front of a large yak-skin yurt, where two adults greeted us warmly. A wooden signboard above the door curtain read, "Nam Co Township Third Tent Primary School" in both the Tibetan and Han Chinese languages.

We walked into the yurt and saw about a dozen students of different ages sitting on the ground. There was a large opening in the top of the yurt to allow sunlight in. At one end was a blackboard the size of a desk. Cangmu, the teacher, told us that the school has 15 students in three grades. They all attend the same class but are given different lessons in turns. The teacher explained that there used to be no school in the area. Now tent schools have been founded and graduates of the tent schools can continue their studies in a nearby town. However, many of the nomad families worry their sons and daughters would become too alien if they go to

Now tent schools have been founded and graduates of these tent schools can continue their studies in a nearby town.



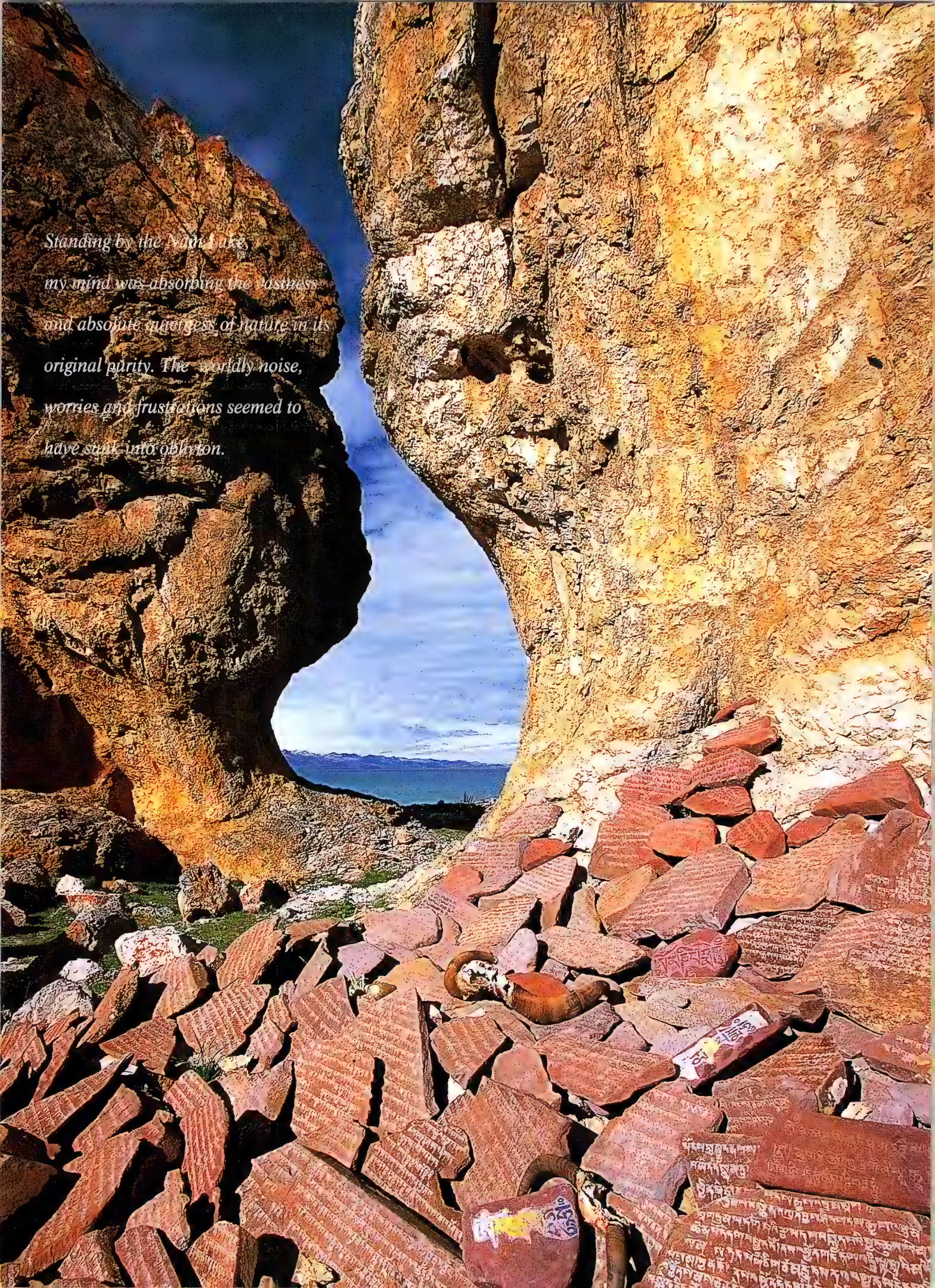


school in the cities. When such students come home for a visit, they often complain about the lack of hygiene and want to sleep in a bed and eat rice. "To be able to go to school in a city is an achievement in itself," Cangmu thought otherwise, but she agreed that it is quite tough for the local students to study away from home. They have no way of knowing where their family yurts have moved to, so it's not easy to find their homes in an area of several hundred square kilometres. Moreover, there's no means of transport on the steppe.

When we drove away over the grass-covered spongy steppe along the tracks made by other vehicles, Pingcuo said, "We've had plenty of rainfall in northern Tibet this year, so the steppe has thrived." In fact, though the steppe looked lush from a distance, a closer look would show that the grass was patchy and thin, quite different from the Inner Mongolian steppe. The short *nazha* grass, however, is high in protein content. A few Tibetan gazelles suddenly appeared on the grassland, running

1. A pagoda on the Nagqu grassland
2. Due to the plentiful rainfall, the pastureland is unusually verdant.
3. This senior Tibetan is wearing a pair of glasses left by an American pilot in the 1930s.
4. This kind of white tent is newly bought from the city, but the local people prefer their old-fashioned yak-skin yurts.
5. The Third Tent Primary School of Nam Co Township

*Standing by the Nam Lake,
my mind was absorbing the vastness
and absolute uniqueness of nature in its
original purity. The worldly noise,
worries and frustrations seemed to
have sunk into oblivion.*





with great speed, but before I could get my camera ready, they disappeared without a trace. Gazelles used to be the largest group of animals on this steppe, but few can be seen today.

During the birthing season in early summer, the gazelles run in large flocks to northern Tibet, following the same route year after year. After the young gazelles are born, the male gazelles stand guard. During this period, even wolves dare not come near because the male gazelles have two dagger-like horns which can inflict deadly wounds. About this time the north-flying wild geese gather in the same area. They feed on the placentas of the gazelles while the gazelles eat the droppings of the wild geese, setting a good example of symbiotic living.

There has been a sharp decrease in the number of gazelles because the gazelle shahtoosh is the finest of wool. Napoleon I, the overlord of Europe in the 18th century, once gave his mistress a shahtoosh shawl, setting the trend for the ladies of the nobility. Even today, in India, such shawls are given as a wedding present, at costs as high as US\$10,000 a piece. A shahtoosh shawl is so soft and light that it can be pulled through a small ring without leaving creases. The hunting of the Tibetan gazelle is now strictly forbidden. However, customs' officers often seize such fine wool in quantities of hundreds of kilograms, an amazing amount considering a single gazelle yields only 100 grams of it.

NAM LAKE, A PEACEFUL BODY OF WATER

The tyres of the jeep swished as they rolled along the tracks filled with water on the grassy steppe towards Nam Lake. After parking the car in front of a row of Tibetan adobe houses by the lakeside, the driver went into one to take a rest. We ran happily to the lake to see the blue water, which was as blue as a clear sky.

As we walked along the curving shore, the lapping of the waves wet our shoes. It felt like we were on a sea beach. In the Tibetan language, Nam Co means Heavenly Lake. Located 4,718 metres above sea level and covering 1,940 square kilometres, it is the highest lake in the world and the second largest salt-water lake in China, next only to

1. The Palm Rocks and the Mani stones on the shore of Nam Lake
2. Nam Co means "Heavenly Lake" in Tibetan. At 4,718 metres above sea level, it is the highest lake in the world and the second largest salt-water lake in China.
3. This pilgrim says that in the Year of the Goat thousands of Tibetans would come to participate in the grand praying ceremony around the Heavenly Lake.
4. Nam Lake at dusk

the Qinghai Lake in Northwest China's Qinghai Province. These were abstract figures to me though, as I stood on the edge of the lake. My mind was absorbing the vastness and absolute quietness of nature in its original purity. The worldly noise, worries and frustrations seemed to have sunk into oblivion, leaving only the purity of nature.

Dusk was descending, gradually dyeing the deep blue Heavenly Lake in a riot of colour. Shi Zhiqiang and Xu Fang had taken off their shoes and socks and were wading hand in hand in the shallows. Looking at their silhouettes, Zhu Ling, sitting by my side, sighed as she lamented, "People in Hong Kong live so close together, but their hearts are so far apart. Here in Tibet, people live so far apart, but their hearts are so close to one another."

When we returned to the small adobe hostel, Pingcuo informed us there were only two beds left in the hostel and so we had to make some arrangements for the night. Xu Fang, hugging Shi closely, took one and the other went to Zhu Ling, so Pingcuo and I had to sleep in the jeep. In the first morning light, I heard knocking on the window of the jeep. I woke up to see Zhu Ling with tears in her eyes. What had happened? "I thought you had closed the door too tight and suffocated," Zhu said, now breaking into a smile. We teased her about the false alarm, but she said seriously, "This has happened many times in other countries. It's no joke."

Even after walking more than half way around Zhaxidao, which is actually a small peninsula projecting into the Heavenly Lake, we found no inhabitants. There was only one Tibetan woman performing prostrations. "In the Year of the Goat, Tibetan tradition requires people to perform prostrations in a complete circle around Nam Lake. It is a time of great pilgrimage and ceremony then," she told us. What a sight it will be with so many people moving around the 200 kilometres of lake shore!

Not far from the hostel, there are two tall rocks standing together like the joining of palms in a prayer for all living creatures. There are inscribed Mani stones piled around them. These stones with earnest prayers carved on them have been carried here by pilgrims. Placing a stone there means having a paradise in one's heart. When these pilgrims return to the mundane world, they can withstand suffering and hardships because the Mani stones stand there as their support and comfort.

NAGQU, A TREELESS TOWN

The town of Nagqu is the highest town in the world and the seat of the Nagqu prefecture government. It has only one street and appeared neither prosperous, nor beautiful. After walking all over the town, we did not find a

1. The yak racing is more an entertaining programme than a contest.
2. Tug-of-war, a competition of teamwork
3. Herdsmen offering butter tea to passers-by
4. A contest for herculean types of men







single tree. It was indeed a lamentable situation. Though trees have been planted every year, none has survived the winter, not even those specially protected in the government's compound.

The most magnificent festival in Nagqu is the yearly Horse-racing Festival. On the morning of the festival, the steppe is dotted with as many as 1,000 yurts, which, resembling large lotus flowers, extend far towards the mountain slope. There are always a few gorgeous and eye-catching ones every year. The most beautiful yurt this year was the one erected by the Agricultural Bank of Nagqu, said to cost over 100,000 yuan. With awnings on the outside, it was like a great hall inside the yurt. The yurt itself was decorated with embroidered pictures of windows and the eight Buddhist lucky signs: umbrella, pennant, vase, goldfish, lotus flower, white sea conch, lucky knot and golden wheel. There were also expensive religious *tangka* pictures. Inside the yurts of ordinary families was a table of red lacquer decorated with golden and silvery designs. On the table were laid silver cups and wooden bowls. Men and women who had come from the pastoral areas were dressed in lined robes of bright purple or green brocade. The men coiled their braided hair on the crown of their heads and covered it with red silk tassels, which extended down to their ears. The women wore head and chest ornaments of red coral and turquoise, which tinkled pleasantly as they walked.

There are many different stories about the origin of the Horse-racing Festival. One convincing story is this: During summer, when the grassland becomes verdant and the animals are fattening up, the lonely herdsmen long for company. Hence the Horse-racing Festival to primarily satisfy their spiritual needs.

This year's Horse-racing Festival was jointly sponsored by the Nagqu government and the Tourist Bureau of Tibet. It was different from past ones. In addition to the commodity fair, the festival was attended by many groups of Chinese and foreign tourists. It was a golden opportunity for businessmen who had come from all parts of Tibet, including Shannan, Xigazê and Lhasa.



During summer, when the grassland becomes verdant and the animals are fattening up, the lonely herdsmen long for company. Hence the Horse-racing Festival to primarily satisfy their spiritual needs.



The tourists became the prime targets of the vendors. A 50-year-old vendor from Sog County, over 220 kilometres away, was so pleased about a huge transaction with a visitor from Taiwan for his caterpillar fungus herbal medicine that he was unable to count his money correctly.

AWARD FOR THE CHAMPION HORSE

Zhu Ling was very disappointed with the horse races. First, there were not many horses in the races and secondly, the horses were small and the riders were thin youngsters. They were far different from the picture in her mind of valiant, soldierly people on horseback.

There are not many tall or big horses in northern Tibet. The horses do not run fast because they are affected by the climate in this high and cold area. The horses brought in from Qinghai and Xinjiang could not cope with the harsh conditions in the high altitude. It is said that a cavalry regiment from outside Tibet once marched into the north, but all the horses soon died. The commander eventually left Nagqu with the saddle in his arms and tears in his eyes.

Zhu Ling frowned and shook her head when she saw that the award for the champion horse was a silk scarf and 10 yuan, but when she saw that even the last horse in a race was given a prize, she smiled again. The prize used to be a cake of yak's dung for use as fuel but was later changed to a block of brick tea for the sake of elegance.

While the horse races were under way, other competitions were going on, which included tug-of-war, target shooting, stone carrying and a yak race. The yak race was more fun for the spectators than a competition for speed. Instead of running in straight lines, the yaks dashed here and there, arousing amused laughter among the spectators.

In the evening, we went to the East Mount Recreation Centre, where, beyond our imagination, disco music had long been popular. The young Tibetans danced quite skilfully. When occasionally a waltz came on, they all called out, "Disco! Disco!" As I watched them twisting their hips and stamping their feet in a feverish dance, I could see that the young men and women of the steppe really knew how to enjoy themselves.

1. The rule of the grassland: your hosts will keep singing until you finish your glass of wine.
2. Shooting on the horseback
3. The Horse-racing Festival also provides an opportunity to display the most beautiful tents.



THE TRAVEL ROUTES IN TIBET, PART 3

Shannan—Birthplace of Tibetan Culture

Photos and articles by Te Grangbu

Lhasa → Zetang → Yumbu Lhakang → Gonggar → Samye Temple

Zêtang is the capital city of Shannan Prefecture.

In the Tibetan language, Zêtang means “the place where monkeys play”, a reference to the Tibetans' belief that their ancestors evolved from monkeys.

1. Yumbu Lhakang is the first palace built in Tibet.
2. Crossing a “bridge” on the roofs of this ancient palace
3. The *tangka* hanging behind the pilgrim is a treasure of Changzhu Temple.



“Yalong is an ancient, mystic place, the birthplace of Tibet’s first plot of cultivated land, first village, first king, first palace, first temple...” Sitting in his office, Solang Damzeng reiterated to us the past and present of Shannan Prefecture. This rather short and plump man, the general manager of the Shannan International Travel Service, counted off the points on his fingers like family heirlooms as he spoke. Seeing our impatience he ended his talk quickly, “All right, seeing for yourselves is better than hearing about it 100 times from others...”

Y U M B U L H A K A N G

On our way to Yumbu Lhakang, Tibet’s first palace, Wang Sanjun, our guide, explained some history, “Zêtang is the capital city of Shannan Prefecture. In the Tibetan language, Zêtang means ‘the place where monkeys play’, a reference to the Tibetans’ belief that their ancestors evolved from monkeys. The legend says that the Divine Monkey, a transmutation of the Guanyin Bodhisattva, mated with Losha, the female demon, to give birth to the people of the snowy land.” This story about the origin of the Tibetan people, which has been retold in the classics, literature and art has its origin in the Monkey Cave on the Kongbo Mountain. As we passed by this mountain, we found it to be a mountain of gentle slopes without any extraordinary features.

During the Saga Tawa Festival, which falls on the 15th day of the fourth month of the Tibetan calendar, people come to the Monkey Cave to pay homage. They congregate first at the Samye Temple, Tibet’s first temple, then climb to the Monkey Cave, spending the whole night parading around the mountain with lamps in hand. The next day, they finally reach the Zêtang Temple back at the foot of the mountain.

We soon could see the Yumbu Lhakang, a pagoda-style castle on a small hill. The Tibetan word Yumbu means female deer, according to Mr. Wang; we found the hill is shaped like the hind leg of a doe.

Along an almost upright staircase, we climbed to the top of the Yumbu Lhakang memorial monument. “This sky-reaching structure was built to indicate man’s intention to be closer to heaven and the native religion’s special adoration for the heavenly gods. Its construction at this dominating place also served defensive purposes in the past,” explained Wang. He also related a story about the 5th-century Tibetan king, Thothori Nyantsen, who had witnessed Buddhist scriptures falling from heaven here. In fact, Buddhism was introduced to Tibet five generations later, at the time of Songtsan Gambo.

The Yumbu Lhakang offers a panoramic view of the

first cultivated field and first village in Tibet. From the top of the mountain to the bottom of the valley, the only sign of human life was some curling smoke in the distance. Before Songtsan Gambo, the area was inhabited by the Yalong tribe. After Songtsan Gambo had conquered the other smaller tribes and founded the unified Tubo Kingdom, he moved his headquarters to Lhasa in the north.

THE YARLUNG ZANGBO RIVER

All the Tubo kings were buried at the same location where their ancestors had founded the kingdom. Perhaps it was their wish to return to their homeland.

To the west of Qonggyai and not far from the Xiangbo River, we saw a large group of tombs of the Tubo kings. History books say there are 21 of them, but recent investigations have found only 16. Nine of them have been initially confirmed, including the tomb of Songtsan Gambo. The stone stele at the tomb of Songtsan Gambo is carved with dragon designs frequently seen in Han areas, and the seat of the stele is in the shape of a giant turtle. On the whole, the Tubo kings' tombs are very similar to the Tang-dynasty emperors' tombs, indicating close cultural contact between Tibet and the Central Plains.

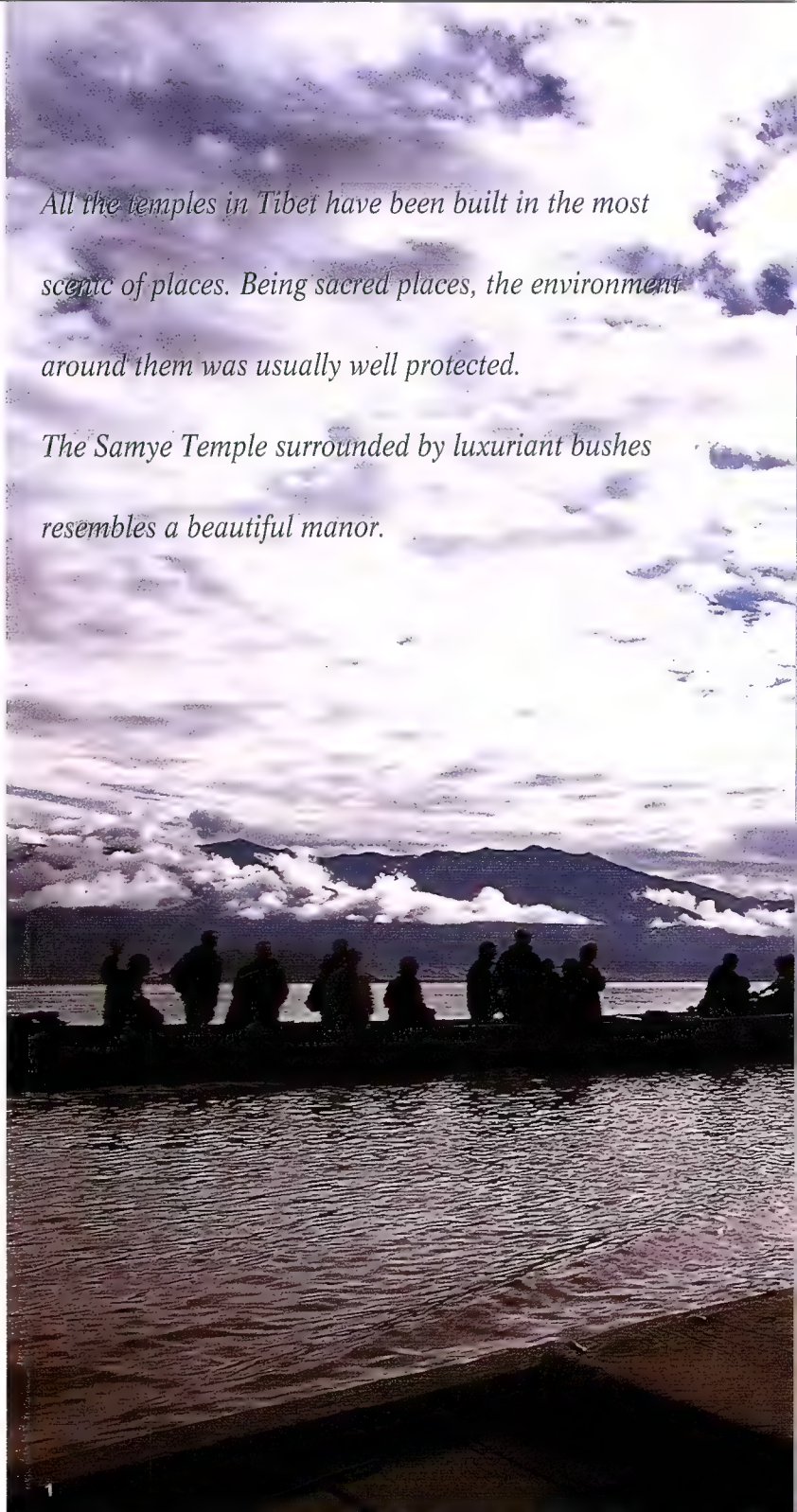
The Samye Temple is on the northern side of the Yarlung Zangbo River, which originates near Zhongba at the northern foot of the Himalayas between Ngari and Xigazê prefectures. It flows south out of Tibet from Mêdog, and through India and Bangladesh, as the Brahmaputra, before emptying into the Indian Ocean. With a total length of 2,057 kilometres in China, it is the fifth longest river in the country and ranks the third in the volume of flow and the second in hydroelectric potential. It is thought that the generating capacity of a hydroelectric station built at the great Namjagbarwa Gorge at the big bend of the Yarlung Zangbo River would be several times larger than the one now being built in the Three Gorges of the Yangtze River.

As we were crossing the river in a flat-bottomed boat, I found that the water was icy cold even though it was August and the boat's superstructure was burning hot in the heat of the sun. The diesel motor droned loudly, but we made little headway against the current. Seeing our impatience, the boatman said, "This is much better now. We used to ferry across the river on a yak-skin boat."

1. The water of the Yarlung Zangbo River is cold even in August.
2. Travelling on a flooded road
3. Monks carrying furniture to the Samye Temple on the north bank of the Yarlung Zangbo River
4. A ferry on the south bank of the Yarlung Zangbo River

All the temples in Tibet have been built in the most scenic of places. Being sacred places, the environment around them was usually well protected.

The Samye Temple surrounded by luxuriant bushes resembles a beautiful manor.





A large truck was parked on the sandy bank of the river. The driver seemed to take no interest in us ferry passengers. We asked him to take us to Samye Temple, but he was reluctant, commenting that it wasn't worth the price of the fuel with so few passengers. He suggested that we "charter the truck" at the extortionate price of 100 yuan one-way and 150 yuan return. He did, however, relent a little by saying that if other passengers came along, the fare would be shared.

THE FIRST TEMPLE OF TIBETAN BUDDHISM

The truck proceeded along the river bank close to the mountain. Before long, we encountered a group of seven or eight people. They had arrived on the previous ferry and, dismissing the driver's high fares, had instead started walking towards the temple. The driver now offered them a ride for only four yuan each, with a glance my way hoping I would keep quiet. Later, crossing a sandy tract, the wheels got stuck in the sand and all the passengers had to help, placing rocks under the wheels, then pushing and pulling until the truck eventually escaped from its trap. Afterwards we were all so exhausted that we all lay down flat in the truck. Upon arriving at the Samye Temple, I returned the money to each of the extra passengers who all bowed to express their thanks. I was simply grateful to them for their gracious help.

All the temples in Tibet have been built in the most scenic of places. Being sacred places, the environment around them was usually well protected. This is particularly so at the Samye Temple. While the exposed greyish rocks in the valley on the northern bank of the Yarlung Zangbo River often give rise to sandstorms, the Samye Temple alone is surrounded by luxuriant bushes, resembling a beautiful manor. Built in 762, the Samye Temple was the first temple in the history of Tibetan Buddhism. The structures in the temple are arranged according to Buddhist concepts. With the Sumeru Mountain at the centre, the place around it illuminated by the same sun and moon is a Small World. A thousand Small Worlds make up a Medium World, and a thousand Medium Worlds, a Great World, which is the Buddhist world of Sakyamuni. The Samye Temple is a Small World.

Following the Tibetan pilgrims,





we filed first into the Great Wuce Hall which represents the Sumeru Mountain. The ground floor of the hall is built in the Tibetan architectural style. In the corridors on the four sides are murals depicting the lives of Sakyamuni. The first floor is in the Han style. The 472 stone statues of Buddha all bear the features of the Han people. On the top floor, in Indian style, are statues of arhats bearing Indian features. We next went to see the Sun Hall and Moon Hall, and then had a look at the symbolic Four Great Continents and Eight Small Continents in the sea on the four sides.

We returned to Zêtang and met Solang Damzeng again. We concluded that what he had suggested was right, that tours of Tibet should start from Shannan, which is not only the birthplace of Tibetan culture, but also at

low altitude.



1. The Wuce Hall that symbolises the Sumeru Mountain, the centre of the world
2. Samye Temple, the first Buddhist temple in Tibet
3. Buying a radio
4. Children playing outside the Samye Temple
5. Watch out, I'm only an amateur barber!



Tibet in the Eyes of Six Admirers

My Feelings of Tibet by Lin Jinghua

A jet-black asphalt road leads all the way from Xining, Qinghai Province, to Lhasa, the bustling capital on the "Roof of the World". Whatever is available in a modern city can also be found in Lhasa.

The Potala Palace, looking majestic and awe-inspiring forever, is a macrocosm of the time-honoured, splendid culture of the Tibetan people.

The boundless and unpredictable land in western Tibet gives some idea about the magic of the universe, and reminds one of the immortal Shangri-La.

Lying on the verdant lawn by the funeral terrace of the Zhikung Monastery, I gained a deep understanding of the Tibetans' candid philosophy about an eternal theme: life and death.

In Ngari, when our vehicle blundered into a surging mountain flood, Tibetan passers-by jumped into the knee-deep water to help push the vehicle out without asking for a single penny in return.

Inside a dimly lit yurt, a warm-hearted host treated us strangers to piping hot buttered tea, not expecting payment.

The remoteness of a journey serves to shorten the gap between people. The mountains may be capricious and unfriendly, but souls of kindness and innocence are linked.

All the way people waved to us with winsome smiles. Everywhere religious streamers flutter in the wind, and piles of Mani stones serve as harbingers of good luck. There is no hypocritical ado about anything. Sincerity and open hearts are what the Tibetans possess.

There is no haggling about money — to help people is a great pleasure. The hardship of the journey is nothing, for our will is staunch and our faith undaunted. What modern civilisation has trodden down elsewhere lives in eternity in this part of the world.

What modern people give up blindly has achieved immortality here. The talk about Tibet being a terribly wild world is so much humbug, for it is a beautiful and magnificent land that stands in comparison with the Garden of Eden. There is no such thing as barbarous tribes; this place is the quintessence of human nature.

In Tibet I eventually see the embryo of life and nature.



Qomolangma — Peak of My Life and Art by Yang Yankang

I've been to Tibet three times, and each time I ended up paying homage to the Qomolangma Peak.

I still remember my hesitating when I first embarked on the road to the Qomolangma: I wanted so much to climb it, but finally gave up for lack of both time and money. During my second visit to Tibet with some photographer friends, we rented a Beijing Jeep. After an entire day on a bumpy road, we found the Qomolangma campsite was only 10 kilometres away. That was when the jeep broke down. When we were forced to retreat, a foreigner emerged from the entrance to the mountain. With a large rucksack on his back and a walking stick, he had travelled on foot for four days simply for taking a look at the Qomolangma.

Oh, Qomolangma, I see you as the acme of my life and art, but see what I am doing, giving up the journey midway like this! I swallowed hard, and bowed three times to the mountain. At that moment I made up my mind that after my return home I would make enough money to buy my own jeep and drive it all the way to the Qomolangma.

The third time, driving my own jeep, I was on the Qomolangma. Ah, the azure sky, and the glistening snow! The Goddess of Qomolangma, you are tugging at so many hearts around the world!

I gingerly climbed up the rocky cliff only a few feet away from the summit. I sat down and, in solitude, began a communion with the goddess, who sat so close to me that I felt I heard her heartbeat.

Every person in this world can reach the summit of his life.



Spirit of the Plateau: as Staunch as Mountains by Liu Dong

It was the summer of 1996. I accepted a lift from Pulan County, Ngari, to Nyogzê. The road was full of cave-ins, and landslides had added to its poor condition. Wrecked trucks, lying eerily under snow and ice by the road, struck terror in my heart. Suddenly, two burly fellows emerged with big sticks in their hands, and blocked our way. Stealthily I picked up a chopper to defend ourselves. Our driver stopped and disembarked, took a pail of drinking water, three packs of cigarette and some food from the truck, and tossed them to the men, who took them and left without a word. "How strange," I muttered. "To commit robbery for such a pittance. Was it worth it?" "Shut up!" the driver shouted at me, much to my bewilderment. "Don't you ever talk about people like that," Cering Wangdu, the doctor who sat behind me, explained good-naturedly. "They are drivers whose trucks have just fallen down the mountain. They stay there to watch over their property, waiting until someone comes to their rescue. Whoever passes by is obliged to help them. You may call this the spirit of the plateau." Since then the driver had never uttered a single word to me. Even today I regret my heartless comment.



Silence reigns over the mountains and rivers on the Tibet Plateau, yet it is precisely this silence that has nurtured an ethnic people as sturdy as the mountains and as resilient as the water. Throughout time, winter and spring come and go, grass and trees flourish and wither, and rivers surge and ebb — in Tibet all this takes place in brooding silence. The changes of time and space, however, are not lost on the Tibetans, who, with the secret heritage from their ancestors, search for the meaning of life sincerely through the lights of butter lamps. Not giving up the mountains by the holy lakes, nor the rivers by the holy mountains, they keep creating life and culture with their trademark resilience. From where *yin* and *yang* converge I have found a world of harmony, and grasped the truth about the Tibetans.

Tibet as I See It by Wang Jian

People often describe Tibet as being mysterious and magnificent. In my opinion, the essence of something being mysterious is strangeness, and behind magnificence lie danger and peril. Strangeness gives rise to feelings of beauty, while danger and peril make one flinch. Thus I conclude: What is unattainable is often the most wonderful.

Without going to Tibet it is not possible to see what mountains really look like. The mountains in Tingri soar to unbelievable heights in icy, statuesque forms; those in Ngari are marked for their gentle slopes and extensive ravines; and every mountain in southeastern Tibet experiences four seasons in a single day. Those visiting a mountain occasionally are awed by its magnificence. The Tibetans, however, grow up with mountains, where the sunny summer's riot of colourful flowers comes and goes in alternation with a winter of howling winds, snow and ice. In this harsh natural environment, the god's protection seems the best thing to hope for. Thus holy mountains and holy lakes are everywhere. Religion, as a means of survival, strikes a chord in the Tibetans' hearts. Tibet is a land cluttered with golden-roofed temples, where local people pray with a piety rarely seen elsewhere. It is not uncommon for a Tibetan to spend his life's savings on a pilgrimage to the sacred city of Lhasa or one of the holy mountains or lakes, to fulfil his life's wishes. It may be said that the pilgrims live in wishes, and the mere thought of such wishes fills their hearts with gratification for the gods. However, the excessive number of temples in an underdeveloped economy undoubtedly has an adverse influence on its development. Visitors to Tibet may find its culture colourful, yet the Tibetans pay a heavy price for the rich colours.

I have visited Tibet repeatedly in my quest for life in the truest sense of the term. While there I was fond of going into remote places to rediscover man's innocence and good nature in a primitive form. Whenever I throw myself into the embrace of nature on this highland to enjoy and struggle with life in any way humanly possible, I feel I am the happiest man in this world.



The World's Most Arduous Roads by Luo Yubo

Of all the roads in China's 31 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions, I have utmost respect for the roads in Mêdog County, Tibet, for this is perhaps the only place in the world without a highway.

The only access to the county is by a narrow footpath that winds its way through a world of great wilderness and danger. The road is formed by a sporadic line of footprints left on the icy surface of fish-scale-like pits, and of brambles and grass trodden down in the primitive woods. Ankle- or even knee-deep ice and snow runoffs are a ubiquitous companion along the way; cave-ins in landslide areas, wild beasts, poisonous snakes, hornets, and blood-thirsty leeches, pose one life-threatening challenge after another. From morning till night it is a road with no ending, no matter how hard you trudge. It is a road of desperation, a road that never fails to cause your feet to swell and become badly blistered. The travel is so back-breaking that on the last leg of the journey your brain becomes a void, and you are only shuffling along mechanically on leaden legs. However, it is precisely this road, nicknamed "demon's intestines" for its hellish conditions, that tugs day and night at the heart of whoever has trekked along it.

As the saying goes, wherever there is a road someone will follow it. The more secluded a place is, the more fascinating it becomes. It is precisely man's desire to conquer that has turned Tibet into the travellers'z Mecca. The more difficult a journey is, the more closely can one grasp the essence of human existence. That is why Mêdog has emerged as the most charming destination for adventurers the world over. The feeling shared by all those who have been to Mêdog County is: "I have walked the world's most difficult road."



A Place That Lives in My Heart by Du Younong

Since my first visit to Tibet in 1987 I have been to the region six times. By air or land I have travelled every corner and in all four seasons. I have left my footprints on virtually all the major roads there, including the Qinghai-Tibet, Sichuan-Tibet, Xinjiang-Tibet, Yunnan-Tibet and Sino-Nepalese highways, and even the ancient Tang-Turbo road by which Princess Wencheng arrived in Tibet.

I can never forget that I have twice been to the foot of the world's tallest peak, the Qomolangma. My visit to the "ice pagoda" forest where the Yangtse River rises was an exciting experience. Four of my toenails fell off during my trek to Mêdog, the world's only county yet to be reached by a highway. I remember well my short stay in a mountain cave and my circling of the holy mountain in Ngari. The ceremony to sun a huge *tangka* of the Buddha, the sorcerers' dances, the "heavenly funerals", and the objects of phallism have all left their images on film through my camera lenses.

I am not a rich man, nor have I any financial support. Frugality has been my lot, whether in daily life or on the road. To save money I gave up air travel in favour of the highways. Without enough money to rent a car, I take buses or simply hitchhike. I love to travel alone, even to remote places like Tibet. So my friends nicknamed me "Solitary Traveller". Yet I have never thought of quitting. I derive tremendous pride from my solitary travels to the "third pole" of the globe.

I am far from a hero or adventurer. I am but an ordinary traveller, photographer, and a lover of the pure land of Tibet. My yearning for Tibet is as pious as the Tibetans are religious.

I have been asked repeatedly what have I gained from my travels in Tibet. My only answer would be perhaps an indescribable feeling, a personal experience, and a bunch of good photographs.

Many friends who have been to Tibet share my feelings. Their desire to return there knows no bounds. Some say that they will be the happiest men on earth if they could die while creating some photographic masterpieces on the road. I have met lots of "Tibet friends", including many who have never been to Tibet but hold a torch for it. One whom I have never met and who has never been to Tibet wrote to say that after listening to my radio program on Tibet she wanted so much to go there for reasons she herself could not fathom. I said that this was precisely where the fascination of Tibet lies.

Life would be meaningful if one could go to places one wants, accumulate as much experience as possible, and produce as many works as possible. 



HANGING RED LANTERNS AT ANCESTORS' GRAVES

Photos & article by Cao Fuchuan

There is a very unique custom in Longxian County in western Shaanxi Province. During the Lantern Festival, which falls on the 15th day of the first lunar month, every family hangs up red lanterns at the graves of their ancestors.

Longxian County, called Longzhou in ancient times, was an important stop on the ancient Silk Road. In matters of foreign cultural influence and wars throughout various dynastic periods, some distinctive folk customs developed here.

During the incessant wars of ancient times many soldiers died on the battlefields far away from home. Legend says that as there was no way for the families to find and bring back the bodies of the deceased, they simply built symbolic tombs to bury the clothes of the deceased. These tombs demonstrated the family's wish that their dear ones would eventually return to their hometown. To guide the wandering souls of the deceased and to show them that they had offspring, family members would worship and put up red lanterns at their ancestors' graves on the 14th, 15th and 16th of the first lunar month.

At dusk on the 14th day, the local people walk along mountain trails to the graveyards for their ancestors, bringing with them food, liquor, cigarettes, candles, firecrackers, fake paper money as well as red lanterns. A sacrificial ceremony is held in front of the graves: Incense sticks are lit, paper money is burnt and all family members line up to bow three times to their ancestors. Then, they light the red lanterns and hang them up in front of the tombs. The number of the lanterns hanging depends on the number of descendants; each descendant puts up one lantern. On the following two days, someone from the family goes back to the graves to change the candles in the lanterns. So, for three nights, flickers of red light illuminate the mountainous landscape of the country. On a clear night, the red lanterns sparkle like a land-bound reflection of the twinkling stars.



Small: After worshipping at their ancestors' graves at dusk, family members light the lanterns and leave.

Large: Thousands of red lanterns light up the land, to the end of the horizon.





Tributes to Guan Yu, God of War

Photos by Ma Hongsheng Article by Cao Fuchuan



Guan Yu, a gallant warrior of the Three Kingdoms Period (220-280), has been revered as the God of War by people all over China. A formidable general of the State of Shu, Guan has been widely recognised by the Chinese as a man of mighty strength, as well as the personification of loyalty and righteousness. After his army was defeated and himself executed by the King of Wu, his head was sent to the King of Wei, who

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once offered Guan a high official position but was rejected by the general who remained loyal to the King of Shu. Cao Cao, the King of Wei, cleverly avoided retaliation from the State of Shu by honourably burying Guan's head in a tomb in Luoyang, Henan Province. In commemoration of General Guan Yu, a temple named Guanlin was later built here. This seems an appropriate resting place for such a respected general since the city of Luoyang played a prominent role in China's history as the capital of nine dynasties from 1027 B.C.- A.D. 937.

Memorial ceremonies for Lord Guan are held every year on three big occasions, when visitors and pilgrims come in an endless stream to the Guanlin Temple. With different purposes on their minds, they express their heart-felt wishes to Lord Guan. By paying their respects and offering sacrifices to him, they hope the God of War would use his mighty power to ensure their safety and success.

The Spring Memorial Ceremony held on the 13th day of the first month is a spontaneous activity of the local folks. Members of The Lord Guan Society in the villages around Luoyang organise themselves and march to Guanlin to perform various memorial rituals. Meanwhile, villagers come from all directions to present sacrificial offerings such as white sheep, to the God to beg him for peace and safety. The 13th day of the fifth month is Lord Guan's birthday, a small-scale celebration. But Autumn Memorial Ceremony on the 13th day of the ninth month is again a big occasion. Moreover, with support from the local government, it has become known as "The International Memorial Ceremony". Overseas visitors and staff of Lord Guan Temples from across the world attend the grand celebration and activities surrounding this traditional and solemn sacrificial ceremony that lasts for over a month.

Both the spring and autumn memorial ceremonies have many sacrificial offerings, which have the strong local flavour of Luoyang. The offerings made of wheat flour, in particular, are very unusual in shape and bright in colour, and are all made by housewives from rural families. The old women's skills in making these offerings have been handed down from generation to generation.

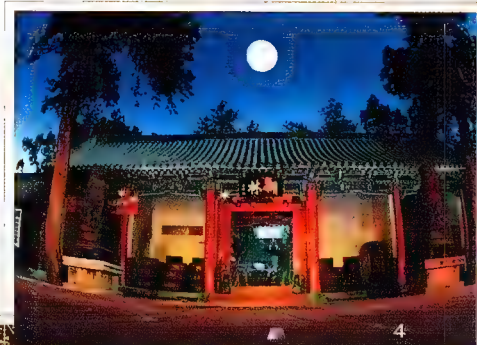
These wheat-flour offerings may seem to be merely ordinary images of birds, animals, flowers, fish, insects, human figures or gods. In fact, they are not only extremely vivid and of such primitive simplicity that no ordinary professionals can compete, but also involve special techniques. They are steamed, then painted in heavy, bright colours and placed at the sacrificial altar for over one month without becoming dried, cracked or deformed. The artisans' talents are obviously prized, as shown by the fact that the local people and government award them such great respect.

The placement of the sacrificial offerings, ranging over 100 varieties, must be put in position after sunset, and by unmarried girls. In addition to the wheat-flour animals representing the 12 astrological years, there are also meats, fish, dried fruits and grains.

Tips for the Traveller

There are direct flights to Luoyang from major cities in China (the most frequent ones from Xi'an), and a direct flight from Hong Kong once a week. There are also long-distance buses from Zhengzhou and Xi'an, and train connections from Beijing, Shanghai and Xi'an through Zhengzhou.

From Luoyang City to Guanlin Temple there are public buses, trolley buses and taxis. The taxi fare is about 20 yuan.



1. Many of the sacrificial offerings are made into the shapes of the 12 animals representing the astrological signs.
2. Lord Guan is worshipped everywhere in China.
3. Boy Playing with Fish made of wheat flour
4. The Guanlin Temple in Luoyang (by Cao Fuchuan)
5. A band of senior folk musicians playing at the ceremony
6. The colours painted on the dough figurines also serve to protect them from cracking. (by Cao Fuchuan)

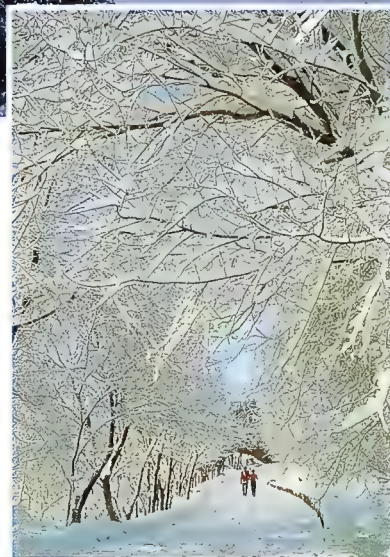


TRAVEL XINJIANG

ON ONE PLANE TICKET

"Travel Xinjiang on One Plane Ticket" is a new program recently launched in Xinjiang.

Touring Xinjiang in summer and autumn is spectacular — the northwestern autonomous region is a world of green mountains and blue waters, with grasslands of grazing cattle and fragrances of fresh fruits. But, winter with its boundless snowfields, is also fascinating. "The Ice and Snow Tour in Xinjiang", the Ürümqi-Turpan Five Nights/Six Days Tour, includes: the snow scenery of the Tianshan Mountains near Ürümqi; skiing, skating, horse-riding, and horse-drawn sledge rides; sights and tastes of the Kazak herdsmen's life; and a visit to the cultural relics of the ancient Silk Road in Turpan.



A Joint Promotion by Xinjiang Tourism Industry

In an agreement with the Xinjiang Airline Company, tourists can take a five-night/six-day tour in Xinjiang for a price slightly higher than a regular return plane ticket from Guangzhou to Ürümqi (about HK\$4,500 or US\$580). The services provided, including transportation, sightseeing, accommodation, food, and recreation are all complete. The winter programme "Travel Xinjiang on One Plane Ticket" is applicable to all routes of the Xinjiang Airline Company including the routes between Ürümqi and these cities in China: Guangzhou, Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Fuzhou, Jinan, and Guilin.



The Ice and Snow Tour in Xinjiang Itinerary

Day 1: Fly to Ürümqi on a scheduled Xinjiang Airline Company flight and lodge at Huanqiu Hotel.

Day 2: Travel by bus to Turpan to visit the underground irrigation system of wells in the morning; lunch in Oasis Hotel. Visit the ruins of the ancient Jiaohe City, mosque and Su Gong Pagoda in the afternoon. Lodge at Oasis Hotel.

Day 3: Visit the Flaming Mountain, Thousand-Buddha Caves and ancient tombs in the morning; lunch in Oasis Hotel. Return by bus to Huanqiu Hotel in Ürümqi for the night.

Day 4: In the morning go by bus to Banfanggou or Shuixigou Skiing Grounds to enjoy the snow scenery, play and ski. Lunch at the skiing ground. Return to Huanqiu Hotel in Ürümqi in the evening.

Day 5: Visit museum and Hongshan Park in Ürümqi in the morning. Shopping in the afternoon. Attend farewell party in the evening at Huanqiu Hotel.

Day 6: After breakfast go to the airport to board return flight.

Juhuatai Skiing Ground

Juhuatai (Chrysanthemum Terrace) Skiing Ground is located about 70 kilometres south of Ürümqi. From here the natural scenes of the Tianshan Range can be clearly viewed. In the summer colourful wild chrysanthemum flowers are in full bloom while in other seasons it is a snow-bound world. The white snowy mountains looming under the blue sky with sheets of white clouds drifting along, and the emerald green pine trees, together create magical scenery. The best season for skiing is

between November and March. This natural alpine skiing ground, 2,270 metres above sea level, is about 500 metres wide and several kilometres long. It provides trails for beginners and more advanced skiers, with slopes graded from 4.8 to 12 degrees. The skiing ground also has shops that rent ski equipment, sleds, snowmobiles and protective sunglasses; snack bars; and Kazak yurts where visitors can rest or lodge. Every morning at nine o'clock special buses leave from hotels in Ürümqi for the hour-long journey to the skiing ground.

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1. Snowy forest near by Juhuatai Skiing Ground (by Song Shijing)
2. Heavy snow often falls in Ürümqi in winter. (by Song Shijing)
3. A Uygur dance performance (by Song Shijing)
4. Snow-covered peaks of the Tianshan Mountains (by Tusubek)
5. The Flaming Mountain (by Song Shijing)
6. Turpan Hotel (by Shi Baoxiu)



Ceramics Tours in China

China has long been closely related to the world of porcelain and pottery. Besides Jingdezhen, the capital of ceramics, there are many other famous porcelain or pottery producers. A tour to some of these cities and towns is definitely an enjoyable and enlightening experience.

A foreign teacher, who is learning the art of ceramics in China, and a Chinese painter, who is addicted to porcelain-making, share their stories with us.



A JOURNEY TO CHINESE CERAMICS CAPITALS



中國「陶鄉瓷都」分佈圖
Sketch Map Showing the Distribution of Famous Kilns in China



Ceramic wares have been both objects of art and daily utensils since ancient times. The use of the name "China" sheds precious light upon the magnitude and high quality of chinaware production in this country. Today, China's position as the world's top porcelain producer is being challenged. Many countries — Japan, Britain, Holland, New Zealand, and others — are improving their porcelain-making technology. Aware of this great challenge, ceramics producers all over the country are carrying forward their legacies while at the same time working hard to break new ground to safeguard China's prestige as the world's major ceramics-making centre. Here is a brief introduction to some ceramics producers in China. This information should help those who love, and wish to learn, the Chinese art of ceramics to make their choices when planning a specialised trip in the future.

SHENHOU TOWN: JUN PORCELAIN

Shenhou Town in Yuzhou, Henan Province, is home to the Jun porcelain, one of China's five major porcelain-making schools during the Song Dynasty (960-1279). It is known as Jun porcelain because at that time Yuzhou was called Junzhou.

Chinese ancients lauded the Jun porcelain ware for its dazzling colour, crystal-like texture and pleasant sounds when touched against other porcelain pieces. Emperors regarded it as their treasure, and commoners were not allowed to possess such items. After the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), one piece of Jun porcelain was said to be worth more than "a mountain of family property".

The key to this style of porcelain lies in the changes that occur in the kiln.

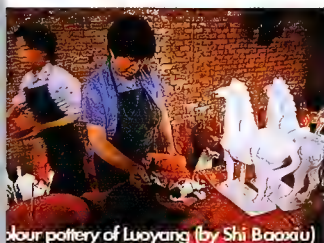


Copper is added to the glaze, and the kiln temperature is carefully controlled. Although the piece is one colour when it is put into the kiln, it changes into a brightly coloured product by the time it is ready. The exotic patterns and colour changes occur naturally and unpredictably.

A vase of Jun porcelain from Shenhou (by Shi Baoxiu)

Transport: Take the train or bus from Zhengzhou or Luoyang in Henan to Yuzhou, and then a minibus bound for Shenhou Town.

Suggestions: There are many porcelain kilns operating in Shenhou Town, thus Jun porcelain wares are no longer as expensive as during the Song and Yuan dynasties. An ordinary piece costs about 100 yuan, but high quality ones sell for over 1,000 yuan. Be careful when buying, for there are fakes on sale with artificially created colours.



Luoyang pottery (by Shi Baoxiu)

RUZHOU: RU PORCELAIN

The Ru porcelain, named after Ruzhou, was another one of the five major styles of porcelain produced during the Song Dynasty.

The surface of the Ru porcelain always looks as if it was just taken out of water — there is a suggestion of moisture in the sheen. Distinctive patterns beneath the glaze include pear skin, crab tracks, and sesame. The glaze comes in grey, light blue, green, and light brown, as well as one suggestive of the sun penetrating the clouds after the rain.

The under-glaze patterns of the Ru porcelain are mostly subtle flower and bird carvings or prints.

Transport: Ruzhou is close to Yuzhou. Everyday there are several dozen buses running between Ruzhou and Luoyang, which is only 80 kilometres away. Porcelain factories and private kilns are easily accessible in the suburbs.

Suggestions: Reproduced antique porcelains are collectors' items; a small piece costs about 30 yuan.

TANGSHAN: NORTHERN PORCELAIN CAPITAL

Tangshan, Hebei Province, is a rising ceramics-producing town. In 1976, a major earthquake hit, but porcelain-making has since made a comeback.

Tangshan ceramics include daily utensils, industrial porcelains, art objects and large porcelain paintings. Among daily utensils, the ash, white jade, and orchid porcelain are most valuable. The hard texture of white-jade porcelain results from firing at high-temperatures. Ash porcelain includes ash from animal bones. The orchid porcelain, made with talc, is famous for its fine, white, translucent texture and glossy surface.

One kind of utensil has a crystallised glaze in iron oxide, which emits a sheen of multiple hues created during firing.



Tangshan ceramics (by Wang Miao)

Transport: Tangshan is within easy reach of Beijing, Tianjin and Qinhuangdao. From Tianjin to Tangshan by train or expressway takes one hour.

Suggestions: The Red Rose brand dinner sets are a good ash porcelain choice; they enjoy high prestige in Europe and North America.

YIXING: PURPLE-CLAY POTTERY CAPITAL

With a pottery-making history of over 1,000 years, Yixing, in Jiangsu Province, is as famous as Jingdezhen. Yixing pottery has several varieties — Jun, celadon, fine and purple-clay which has won gold medals in world trade fairs.

An abundance of quality clay, and a contingent of master artisans support the ever-improving quality of the purple-clay pottery. Yixing is particularly known for its exquisitely-designed and crafted tea sets. There are over 1,000 varieties, including the imitation Dongpo and Gongchun tea pots and tea pots in various plant shapes. Tea made in a purple-clay pottery pot is said to become sweeter with time.



Transport: Yixing in Jiangsu Province is close to Shanghai, Suzhou, Hangzhou and Nanjing. From Wuxi to Yixing by bus is only 30 minutes.

Suggestions: Both state-owned and private kilns operate in Dingshu Town, near Yixing. Almost every family operates its own pottery workshop; the grade and price depend on the credentials of the maker. Works by ordinary artisans sell for about 10 yuan apiece, and those of master craftsmen may cost over 1,000 yuan.

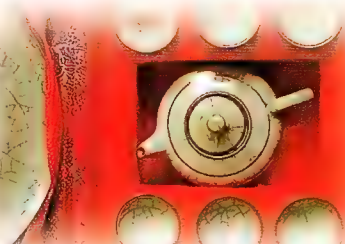


Longquan celadon
(by Chu Xiaoqing)

LONGQUAN: Celadon Porcelain

Longquan County, Zhejiang Province, is reputedly the ancestral sanctuary of coloured-porcelain in China. Porcelain kilns aroused here in the 10th century, and reached their zenith during the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279). The kilns of two brothers surnamed Zhang were most famous; the elder brother's was one of the five most famous kilns of the Song Dynasty.

The Longquan celadon is known for its simplistic design, and its shiny and crystal-clear glaze colour. The Longquan celadon uses alternating deep and relief carvings with reticular technique, creating transparent, translucent and solid textures.



Song-style tea set (by Peng Zhen'ge)

Transport: Longquan County is situated in southern Zhejiang. Fly to Wenzhou, switch to a bus or train to Lishui, and then take a bus to the county seat of Longquan where major state and private porcelain kilns are clustered.

Suggestions: The Longquan celadon wares include imitation ancient works, utensils and objects of art. Prices are high because of low output and complex technology. The cheapest tea set costs about 100 yuan, and expensive ones, over 1,000 yuan. They are available in shops in Hangzhou.

White Porcelain of DEHUA, Black Porcelain of JIANYANG



Black ceramics of Jianyang (by Xie Guanghui)

Porcelain making dates back to the Tang Dynasty (618-907) in Dehua County in southern Fujian. By the Song Dynasty, Dehua's porcelain was selling in Southeast Asia, and white-porcelain-making began in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). The black porcelain of Jianyang, in north Fujian, caught the emperors' fancy during the Song Dynasty.

For its glossy, yellow-white texture, the Fujian white porcelain is known as "Ivory Porcelain" among the literati and "Pork-fat White Porcelain" among common folks. There is also the snow-white porcelain often seen in statues of the Goddess of Mercy. The glazed surface of the black porcelain is as smooth as a mirror with patterns and lines underneath as fine as rabbit hair. There are traditional tea cups, vases, writing accessories, tea sets, and animal sculptures.

Transport: Dehua County is about 100 kilometres from Quanzhou. Jianyang is in the vicinity of the Wuyi Mountain, and has a bus route leading to the porcelain kilns in Shuiji Township about 20 kilometres from downtown Jianyang.

Suggestions: Fujian's black and white porcelains are rather expensive. A tea set or a Goddess of Mercy statue costs over 100 yuan. They are also available in souvenir and porcelain shops in cities.



White porcelain from Dehua (by Shangguan Zhonghua)

JINGDEZHEN: China's Porcelain Capital

The entire population of Jingdezhen is engaged in the porcelain-making industry — a phenomenon rarely seen in other Chinese cities or towns. With its world-famous porcelain-making industry that started over 2,000 years ago, Jingdezhen has long been a representative of Chinese porcelains.

The Jingdezhen porcelains are "as white as jade, as thin as paper, as bright as a mirror and, when struck, sound as pleasant as a chime". In modern times, the city has developed four famous varieties: famille-rose, blue-and-white, linglong, and eggshell. Many other precious varieties have been developed over the years, and new colourful glazes have been produced under temperatures of more than 1,000°C. Among the most famous of such glazes are "Jihong" and "Sanyang Kaitai", known as "pearls of the crown of porcelains", which are lauded as something that can only be made by chance.



Paper-thin porcelain lampshades
of Jingdezhen (by Shi Baoxiu)

Transport: Jingdezhen in southeast Jiangxi can be reached from Jiujiang, Nanchang and Mount Huangshan. Railways link the city with Nanchang and Huangshan, but the bus is more convenient between Jiujiang and Jingdezhen.

Suggestions: Porcelains are ubiquitous in Jingdezhen.

There are a dazzling array, with prices ranging from expensive to cheap. Antiques and new products are available at the downtown flea market. The Porcelain Museum and ancient porcelain kilns are in the suburbs.

ZIBO: ARTISTIC POTTERY

Zibo in Shandong Province is known for its artistic pottery. Artistic pottery in Zibo comes in a rich variety. There are life-like figure sculptures, powder-enamel pottery, and imitation pottery antiques. The Zibo style of pottery is distinguished for its glazes. Tea sets with "twin-point" (or "heavenly eyes") glaze, that is, black glaze studded with silvery spots, are regarded as superb utensils in the Japanese tea ceremony.

Zibo pottery is also famous for a glaze with yellow and green dots — reminiscent of broken tea leaves.



Colourful porcelain figures of Zibo (by Li Xia)

Transport: Zibo is situated on the highway between Qingdao and Jinan, about an hour from Jinan.

Suggestions: Apart from porcelains, Zibo also produces black pottery and plates with coloured figure paintings. Don't miss the chance to make a porcelain picture for yourself!

YAOZHOU: BLUE PORCELAIN

Tongchuan in Shaanxi Province was under the jurisdiction of Yaozhou in ancient times. A cluster of ancient porcelain kilns dating back to the Tang and Song dynasties have been found in the suburbs of Tongchuan. The blue porcelain of Yaozhou was as famous as the country's five major porcelains during the Song Dynasty, but unfortunately the technology was lost during the wars and turmoils of the Yuan Dynasty. Over two decades ago, the Chenlu Town Pottery Factory successfully restored the technology for making the Yaozhou blue porcelain.

The Yaozhou blue porcelain is covered by an olive-coloured glaze with ice-like patterns and is fashioned in classic and elegant shapes. Major products include incense burners, writing accessories, and dinner, wine and tea sets.

Transport: Travel from Xi'an to Tongchuan is convenient by railway or highway. Chenlu Town is in the suburbs of the city.

Suggestions: The blue porcelain incense-burners, about 100 yuan, are known for their ancient style and are valuable collectibles. Tea sets sell for about 50 yuan each.



Artistic pottery works of Shiwan (by Shi Baoxiu)

Transport: Take the bus or train from Guangzhou to Foshan and switch to a minibus to Shiwan Town, where the streets are lined with pottery factories and shops. Tiny pottery figures sell for only one or two yuan apiece.

SHIWAN: ART POTTERY

Shiwan pottery was well-known in southern China and the entire Southeast Asia as early as in the Qing Dynasty.

Figure sculptures are what makes the Shiwan pottery so famous. Foshan's Ancestral Temple impresses visitors with its classic figurines that are clustered under the eaves, on the roof ridges and on the walls. These vivid figurines — there are thousands of them, grouped in 24 pictures based on historical tales — were all made in Shiwan, a town in the suburbs of Foshan in Guangdong. The Shiwan style of pottery sculpture falls into four categories: figures, animals, miniature landscapes, and daily utensils. The pottery works can be as small as a peanut or even a rice grain.

FENGXI: PERFORATED PORCELAIN

Fengxi Town is the cradle of the Guangdong school of modern artistic porcelain. Despite its avant-garde and outlandish style, the Fengxi school is actually part of the local tradition. Blue porcelain was made in the Tang Dynasty, and porcelain sculptures in the Song.

Fengxi pottery is renowned for its human figures, flowers and perforated vases. The motifs for the Fengxi school of porcelain figures are drawn from the local Chaozhou Opera. The nearly-real flowers have petals as thin as paper. Perforated vases, made by carving tiny holes into the vase walls before glazing, become exquisite objects of art after firing.

Fengxi Town also produces gongfu tea sets.



Making a porcelain flower (by Shi Baoxiu)

Transport: Express buses go to Chaozhou from Guangzhou, Xiamen, Shenzhen and Hong Kong; minibuses cover the three kilometres to Fengxi Town.

Suggestions: Colour-glazed statues of the Goddess of Mercy, Lord Guan Yu and Smiling Buddha sell for 100-200 yuan apiece. A perforated vase costs 20-100 yuan. A gongfu tea set sells for 50-100 yuan, but ordinary tea sets cost only 20 yuan.



Gongfu tea sets of Fengxi (by Shi Baoxiu)

AN AMERICAN LEARNS CERAMICS IN JINGDEZHEN

Photos & article by Shan Xiaogang

Carla Coch from Alfred, New York, U.S.A., was an English teacher at the Ceramics Institute in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi Province, for 6 weeks. Her Chinese colleagues and students affectionately nicknamed her "Karaoke". Although she was among the ceramics students every day, she had no experience as a potter.

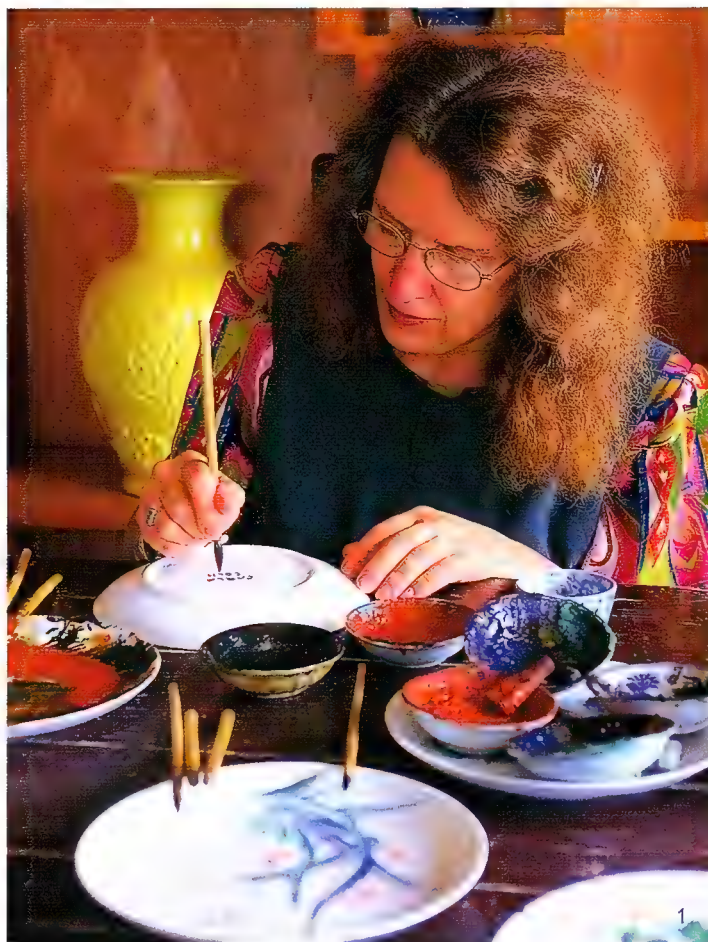
"It's a pleasure for me to live and teach in China's porcelain capital, but if I don't take a few of my own ceramic works back home, how will I face my friends?" Carla made up her mind to learn the art of ceramic-making. On learning what was on her mind, her Chinese friends soon took her to see the nationally-famous master of ceramic art, Liu Yuanchang. After her conversations with Master Liu, Carla admired the ceramic works made by the great master and others. She also read extensively on Chinese ceramics. "I first knew Jingdezhen's porcelain from tableware," she said. "Here I have seen much more fine porcelain works than I had ever imagined...."

Guided by Master Liu, Carla started her learning of ceramic-making, beginning with basics. A slab of clay on the throwing wheel soon became a beautiful vase in the hands of her teacher. But when it came to Carla's turn, things were quite different. The seemingly obedient soft clay did not listen

to her although she worked hard with both hands up and down, inside and outside the clay. After working a while she gave up. Crestfallen, she looked at the shapeless slab of clay and asked in broken Chinese: "Why doesn't the clay listen to me?"

However, as a teacher at the Ceramics Institute who

was imperceptibly influenced by what she constantly saw and heard, Carla was not a slow learner. With the help of her patient teacher, she relaxed her hands and, after several rounds of experiments, succeeded in making a



jar — although she had intended to make a vase. She was very happy anyway because this was the first porcelain work she had ever made with her own hands!

Next she learned to paint on porcelain. This was easier for her as she had learned Chinese painting. Moreover she was simply copying. After she had finished her lovely painting she even put her name on the plate. Finally, she hit upon a new idea: she put different kinds of coloured glaze on the palm of her hand and pressed it onto a white plate. An abstract picture immediately appeared. Pointing at the distinct prints on the plate, she ecstatically exclaimed, "No one will dare say this is not my work!"

The painted plate was immediately sent to be fired in the kiln. The next day when Carla got her plate, she was extremely happy. "Chinese ceramic art is very rich. I learned only a tiny bit of it," she said. "But it's enough for me to show off to my friends as a witness that I've lived in the porcelain capital Jingdezhen for some time and taught those future great masters of Chinese ceramic art."



Tips for the traveller

The International Ceramic Art Centre at the Jingdezhen Sculptural Porcelain Factory is a good place to visit and study Jingdezhen porcelain. In addition to an exhibition of excellent porcelain works, there are also workshops of famous ceramics masters, shops selling the chinaware of the Ming and Qing dynasties, and restaurants and tea-houses.

Manager: Liu Yuanchang, a great master of Chinese arts and crafts

Tel: (798) 1397988112

Contact person: Zhu Shan

Tel: (798) 844 1239 **Fax:** (798) 844 2487

Address: 218 East Road One, Jingdezhen

1. Carla Coch signing her plate
2. Visiting the nationally-famous ceramic artist, Liu Yuanchang
3. Guided by her teacher, Carla learns to make a mould.
4. Making her palm print on a porcelain plate
5. Carla's ceramic collection



MAKING MY OWN

POTTERY PLATES

Photos & article by Mu Ren

Dengcheng County in Shaanxi Province, which sits at the eastern end of the 400-kilometre-long Shaanxi Plain, is close to the Yellow River and near the point where Shaanxi, Shanxi and Henan provinces meet. It is very famous for the folk chinaware made in its Yaotou Township.

One winter I went to Yaotou, located on top of a terrace, to do some sketching. In this ancient town, I found chinaware shops on both sides of the narrow cobbled road. With chinaware piled everywhere, I had to walk with caution through streets. Yaotou produces coal, clay and glaze, all indispensable materials in the making of chinaware. Ceramics kilns began to appear in Yaotou in the Song Dynasty (960-1279), and porcelain production has gone through many changes in the past 1,000 years. Today, porcelain manufacturing continues, and most kilns are managed by individuals making chinaware during the slack farming seasons. Their main products are practicable blue and white porcelain and celadon for daily use.

This town is really a world of ceramics. The paths are paved with ceramic tiles. The surrounding walls and gate towers of farmers' houses are built of incomplete vats and jars; they are interlocking, variegated, and dazzling under the sunshine. The hill slopes are littered with piles several metres high of broken chinaware pieces, both old and new.

Walking past a small earthen mound, I found a spacious cave in the shadow of a big tree where two old men were busy making bowls. They threw the blended clay onto the stone wheel, then turned it to start the processing. When the wheel stopped, I saw that a bowl had taken shape in their hands. With a thin wire, they cut through the slab of clay at the bottom of the new bowl. When the bowls were semi-dry, they returned them to the wheel for further processing. Only when the bowls were 80-percent dry could the glazing and painting begin. A young girl turned the semi-finished bowls around with her left hand while using her right hand to dip two brushes in glaze and draw two fine lines on the edge quickly and evenly. In only a few strokes, she painted an accurate and life-like image of an orchid, a bird, or an insect on the bowl.

Watching her working, I itched to have a try myself. But when

I started, I found it was not an easy job. Even the first step, the grinding of clay, was arduous. Generally, the blocks of clay are put in a round stone trough where they are ground with a stone roller pulled by a donkey. The ground clay powder must be carefully sieved. The fine powder is used for bowls, plates, dishes, tea sets and wine cups, while the rough one for jars and basins. After the powder is mixed with water, repeated powerful stirring and pounding are needed. Sometimes the potters simply tread on the clay dough with their bare feet to squeeze air bubbles out of the clay. This makes the products finer and smoother.

After preparations were made, I racked my brains to come up with a design. By dawn an idea had sprung to mind: Why don't I make some ornamental plates? I was addicted to the abstract dot-and-line painting of primitive pottery and the graceful line drawing used in the murals of Dunhuang Grottoes and Tibetan Buddhist temples. As an artist myself, I wanted to make somewhat abstract ceramic works. Although I had the idea in my mind, it was extremely difficult to realise it with my paintbrush. For a while I was in a quandary. What is painting? Painting is a kind of sense, a kind of feeling, a kind of spirit. Only when one breaks out of all

restrictions, can one enter the realm of freedom and know how to paint. Finally, as I painted and engraved on the bases, my thoughts ran wild like birds flying freely in the sky, and I achieved what I wanted.

Snow was falling, and the kiln was sealed off when the ceramic articles were sent in for firing. I sat with happiness and anticipation in the cold cave until a miner came by, saying that a young "city" woman was also busy kneading and painting clay figures at the western end of town.

As I walked through the snow to see this art college student majoring in ceramics, I found my footprints appeared similar to the patterns I had just painted. What has happened to my ceramic works? I had great expectations that night.



The Grand Chang'an Theatre in Beijing

Photos & article by Zhu Jianhui



Peking Opera masks portraying different roles



A great stage



Watching performances over a cup of tea puts one in a nostalgic mood.

Anyone with even the slightest interest in opera will be aware of the fact that there is a grand theatre in Beijing called Chang'an. Once located in the heart of the city at Xidan, the theatre has a history of more than 60 years and has been a major stage for various forms of performing art, particularly Peking Opera. It is a must for any opera fan.

The original theatre was built on the ground occupied by a warehouse, which was purchased by a wealthy person in 1934 for building the theatre.

The theatre was launched into service on February 1, 1937. Among the first operas to be staged were *Dance of the Spirit Master*, *The Dancing Fortune God* and *Three Promotions in Succession*, all of which had a bright tone. Ever since then, it has been the venue of many superb opera performances.

More than 60 years later, on October 12, 1990, Beijing's municipal government decided to relocate the theatre in order to build the south exit of the Xidan subway station. In 1996, the new theatre, a building combining traditional national architecture with modern science and technology, was completed on Jianguomennei Street on the east edge of the city centre. The theatre itself occupies about 5,000 square metres. Outside, you are welcomed in through an entrance resembling an ancient archway, with a yellow aluminium-tile roof. The lintel consists of five white marble sign boards; one metre tall and 1.2 metres wide, each carries a 24-K gold-plated character announcing *Chang An Da Xi Yuan* — the Grand Chang'an Theatre. Facing the street is a wall adorned with 16 bronze Peking Opera masks, each 2.2 metres square, depicting the four major roles of this performing art. The lobby is built entirely from Italian marble. On the first floor, 26 long tables are surrounded by a total of 130 mahogany chairs. Here spectators are served tea and local delicacies on ceramic sets with hand-painted opera images, specially ordered by the theatre. It is quite an experience sipping tea while enjoying the stage performance. Above, the second



Preparation for a painted-face

floor is divided into 36 luxurious boxes.

From its very conception, the theatre has been inseparable from Peking Opera. Beijing has been the political centre of the country since the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), and has also taken centre stage for operas in northern China. In the early Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), different local operas, including *Kunqu*, *Gaoqiang* and

Bangzi, competed in Beijing for spectators. In 1790, four opera groups from Anhui, namely the Sanqing, Sixi, Chuntai and Hechun troupes, came to perform their *Erhuang* opera in Beijing. The *Erhuang* tune was a combination of Anhui and Hubei folk songs. Another local opera, *Xipi*, was created by artists in Hubei on the basis of *Bangzi* tune from the Northwest. Finally *Erhuang* and *Xipi* merged into a new form of Erhuang Opera. While performing in Beijing, these artists from Anhui created Peking Opera by absorbing rich nourishment from other forms of performing art. In the following two centuries, Peking Opera singers, generation after generation, continuously improved this art form, making it the most representative and popular national opera throughout the country. It is no wonder that people refer to Peking Opera as the "national opera" and "the quintessence of Chinese culture".

There is a popular saying which goes: "Unless you've been to the Great Wall, you're not a real man; unless you've seen Peking Opera, your life has no meaning." A visit to Beijing is certainly not complete without either of the two. And, when you go to a theatre for a Peking Opera, the magnificent Grand Chang'an Theatre should be the first choice.

Translated by F. Huang

Tips for the Traveller

Admission to the Grand Chang'an Theatre ranges from 60 to 800 yuan.

There are shows every evening. During weekends, there are afternoon matinées beginning at 1:30, staged for the benefit of those who have to work during the week.

Address: 7 Jianguomennei Street, Beijing

Ticket reservation: (10) 65101309

Enjoy Yourself with **Monkeys** on Mt. Emei

Photos by Yu Guangliu

Article by Huang Yanhong



2

It was the repeated invitations of a friend that enticed me to Mt. Emei in Sichuan. "Please come to enjoy yourself with the monkeys!" he entreated.

"Humans have evolved from monkeys." This was the first thing I learned in primary school about the human development. I did not believe it until I saw the evidence from the comparisons of human and monkey skulls. Thus, I always show them respect; one never knows if today's monkeys might someday reach our level of development.

Upon reaching Mt. Emei, we immediately went to Jiulao (Nine Elderly) Cave, an area where many wild monkeys live. Soon after passing the Qingyin Pavilion, I saw a group of visitors stopped on the road by a horde of monkeys. It seemed that the humans and the animals were "negotiating". A big monkey, the leader, sat in the middle of the road. Behind, some hung leisurely in the trees while others paced by the side of the road, seemingly ready to attack once the leader gave the order. It was apparent that the tourists would not be able to pass if they did not pay their "toll". Fortunately, they had heard of the "waylaying and looting" techniques of the Emei monkeys and had peanuts and candy ready. The young monkeys were shy but the adult ones strutted forward immediately, and ate whatever was offered. They were very deft in removing the peanuts shells and candy wrappings. Anything they did not like, they threw away angrily.

Some visitors sneaked quickly past the monkeys while they were greedily eating, and others took out their cameras. One careless person



took food out directly from his travel bag in front of the monkeys. Several monkeys immediately pestered him for more; he had to show them his empty bag before they would go away.

One man fed the cute, young monkeys the most and this enraged an adult monkey who rushed up and knocked him flat on the ground. We were all stunned by the monkey's strength and jealousy.

Busy myself shooting pictures, I did not pay my toll. This seemed to anger the "robbers" and some ran towards me. Intending to flee, I was stopped by my friend who said, "Once you run, they will chase you. Just pat your pockets and lay both hands open to indicate that you have nothing to give to them. They will let you go." I did as I was told and it was very effective. With no more groups of visitors around, the monkeys wandered about looking for remnants on the ground.



1. "Stand up and Salute!" These two monkeys have been trained to be polite. (by Huang Yanhong)
2. In the face of such rude theft, you can do nothing.
3. Domesticated monkeys on the Golden Summit have become their masters' earning tool. (by Huang Yanhong)
4. So long as you are a good communicator, you can quickly win their favour.
5. What can you do during an attack like this, call the police?



Tips for Watching the Monkeys

One can get to Mt. Emei from Chengdu by long-distance bus (New South Gate Bus Station) or train. From Emei Town, there are bus services to Jieyin Hall, Wannian Temple and other tourist spots.

1. Best Place to Watch Monkeys: Jiulao Cave and Xixiang (Elephant Washing) Pool, where hordes of wild monkeys live.
2. Preparations: Take food such as peanuts and candy. Pass through the monkey area in a group.
3. Warnings for monkey-watching areas:
 - a) Take food out beforehand; do not retrieve food from bags on the spot;
 - b) Do not let the monkeys see that you are afraid of them; act casually;
 - c) Do not threaten or beat the monkeys; this may result in vengeful attacks;
 - d) Be cautious when feeding and taking pictures at the same time;
 - e) Do not feed only the young monkeys; this will make the adults angry;
 - f) Hold your bags and cameras firmly, or the monkeys may snatch them;
 - g) If you have no food, pat your pockets and open your hands to show you have nothing.



SHANGLI a Small Ancient Town



Photos by Yang Yankang, Huang Yanhong Article by Huang Yanhong

1. Figures in relief on the eaves of an ancient house (by Yang Yankang)

2. During the harvest season, this

downtown street turns to a sunning ground. (by Bao Li)

3. Bas-reliefs on the Memorial Archway of Fidelity and Piety (by Yang Yankang)

4. Most old houses in this ancient town have exquisitely carved windows. (by Yang Yankang)

The small ancient town Shangli is located on the eastern side of the Luochun Mountain in the Linqiong section of the ancient Southern Silk Road in Sichuan. Originally called Luocheng, Shangli has a history of 2,000 years. Many buildings with Ming and Qing features still exist on the streets today, and the local folks still retain their simple ways of living. These aspects have attracted tourists in recent years.



The Five Prominent Families

After we got to Ya'an, we headed for Shangli on the same day without a single stop. On the way our local friend told us stories about this small ancient town. But what impressed us most was the story about the "Five Prominent Families": Around the end of the Ming Dynasty in 1644 and into the early Qing Dynasty, five families moved to the small town from Shaanxi, Hunan, Hubei and Guangdong provinces. They soon became very prominent and influential — the Yangs were known for their officialdom, the Hans for their fortune in trade, the Chens for their grain reserves, the Xus for their beautiful women, and the Zhangs for their martial arts. This interesting story, tinged with a cultural flavour, made us all smile with scepticism.

As soon as we got off the bus in Shangli, we went around the streets looking for traces of these five families. The first person that came into our sight was a rather pretty girl on her way home from a fair. As I walked up to her with my camera ready, to ask about her name, she quickened her step and ignored me. I ran after her and asked again. Finally realising that I was a tourist with simple curiosity, the girl answered, "My surname is Zhang," before running away. It dawned on me that even the Zhangs of martial arts fame also had beautiful descendants.

Then we came across a middle-aged woman. This time, smiling, I walked over and struck up a conversation with her. She told me that both she and her husband were surnamed Han. Her family was not rich at present, not at all like their ancestors. Obviously the five prominent families who had moved here hundreds of years ago had simply blended into the local population.

The Two Unique Bridges

Connected with the cities and counties of Ya'an, Mingshan, Qionglai and Lushan on four sides, Shangli was a bustling place in



ancient times where traders came back and forth. Today, for various reasons, it has lost its position and magnificence as a business centre, but on the days of commodity fairs, there is still a lively bustling scene, with people shuttling loads

on their shoulders, carrying baskets on their backs, or driving carts full of goods.

The town's elegance has remained, anyway. There are two unique bridges in the small town. The bridge which lies across the Longxi River at the entrance to the town was built in the Qing Dynasty and is referred to as an "overpass". A careful look would find that two footpaths run across the riverbank beneath the bridge, where farmers walk every now and then. A stone staircase links the upper and lower decks of the bridge.

The other ancient bridge, called Erxian (Two Immortals) Bridge, is on the northern side of the town where Shangli's poetic rural scenery is best represented. Built in 1777, this bridge is a single-arch stone bridge with a large span. Beneath the bridge a river runs gurgling past, and from its arch you can see the 18 Steamed Bread Hills looming in the distance that surround this small town. People call these hills the "18 Arhats Worshipping Bodhisattva". It is said that in fine weather you can also see the huge Sleeping Buddha lying on top of the Tiantai Mountain at the far distance.



Archway Saved by Red Army Slogans

On the eastern side of the small town an eye-catching stone memorial archway towers in a field cultivated with crops. Known as the Memorial Archway of Fidelity and Piety, it is about 11 metres high and seven metres wide. On its pillars, beams and eaves are hollowed-out relief carvings depicting over 20 scenes and 100 figures of Sichuan Opera, and on its base are carved designs such as "Two Dragons Playing with a Pearl" and "Two Phoenixes Worshipping the Sun". This is a cultural relic with double significance — for on this ancient structure with exquisite carvings, there are also slogans painted on by the Red Army.

Shangli township has a population of over 10,000 and its per capita cultivated land is less than 1,000 square metres. There would normally have been pressure on the local people to remove such a huge archway occupying a large piece of fertile land. We were told that it was the Red Army's slogans on the archway that had saved it from destruction by the Red Guards during the "cultural revolution". Not far from this archway, there is the Xiyuan Bridge. At its end stands an ancient pagoda which also bears Red Army's slogans such as "Resist Japanese Aggression and Fight Against Chiang Kai-shek!" and "Fight for Salvation and Save Our Country!" Again, these slogans were the

reason this pagoda was able to survive the destructive forces of the times.

In 1935 the 31st Division of the Red Army was stationed in Shangli for eight months and helped establish the Soviet-style political system. During their time here they put their political slogans on numerous stone walls and steles. More than 20 of



1. The 200-year-old Two Immortals Bridge is still in good shape. (by Huang Yanhong)

2. The poetic rural scenes of Shangli (by Huang Yanhong)

3. The Memorial Archway of Fidelity and Piety occupies a large area of land. (by Huang Yanhong)

4. As it often rains in Shangli, most kindergartens have indoor playgrounds for the kids.

5. On market days, the Qing-dynasty overpass is always thronged with people.



these slogans remain on structures still standing today, adding traces of relatively modern history to this ancient town.

Elegant Craftsmanship Left Unprotected

Many of the buildings in Shangli are more than 300 years old. Led by our local friend, we left the main streets and walked in the light rain along a muddy road for several kilometres to Dashuiwan, southeast of Shangli. The Han Family Courtyard, locally known as “Seven Stars Surrounding the Moon”, which stands here is a typical example of these ancient buildings.

We walked into one of the seven courtyards in the complex. There was nobody home, and the doors were unlocked. The exquisite buildings, especially the excellent wood carvings, astonished us. All doors, windows and eaves were decorated with hollowed-out wood carvings or relief engravings. Among the about 100 designs, not one was the same. Most of the designs took their themes from the classic stories, “The Twenty-four Requirements of Filial Piety” and “The Eight

Immortals Crossing the Sea”. Some of the designs were scenes depicting people studying, practising martial arts, holding evening parties or fighting battles at the border. Though the colour of these wood carvings had faded and some of them had cracked with the passage of time, their ingenious design and elegant craftsmanship still remained to represent gorgeous pieces of ancient architectural art.

After visiting the courtyard, we became somewhat concerned. Such exquisitely constructed living quarters were completely unprotected — if left like that, the damage would continue and they would soon no longer exist.

A Night at a Small Inn

The streets in Shangli are arranged in the shape of a cross. Originally, a large theatre surrounded by houses lay in the centre, a

typical mark of an ancient town. At dusk we took a walk along the streets amidst the country music coming from a speaker, and now and then local folks would chat with us. On their own initiative they told us whose house was the oldest, where the Red Army’s slogans were located, which trees were

1,000 years old.... On the streets we saw many public notices pasted up. One notice was about the raising of funds to install TV cables, and another was a day-to-day account of the money used to construct waterworks.

In the evening we lodged in the only inn in town, the Baiquan Inn. Though small in size, with only 10 beds at most, the inn was permeated with a local flavour. The house was all built out of wood; a huge jar was placed beside the kitchen stove to heat water for the customers; the black-and-white TV sets in the rooms had only one channel; the lavatory was inside a pigsty.... I stayed in a single room, which was only four square metres in size. Pasted on its walls were various kinds of printed matter, from the *Red Flag* magazine of the 1960s to popular calendars of beauties and leisure cars. As I read them, I found my train of thought had to jump wildly from the article “On Khrushchev’s Revisionism” to the report “A leisure car can sell for five million yuan”.... The changes throughout the past 30 years were all displayed on the walls.

Rain kept pattering down all night, keeping time with the Longxi River gurgling outside my window. As the cocks began to flap their wings and crow in the courtyard in the early morning other birds sang as if in competition. Although the noise disturbed my sleep, I nevertheless had a good taste of small town life.

Waiting by the White Horse Spring

The next day we went several kilometres by bus from Shangli to White Horse Temple, which was located in a dense forest. At a nearby 700-year-old tomb, we were surprised to see a stone carving with a scarlet kafirily (*Clivia nobilis*) design. From this design

specialists now believe that this plant existed in China in ancient times.

Beside the temple is the White Horse Spring. Its strange, natural features appear in different ways to different visitors. At the bottom of the pool at the outlet of the spring, it is said, there is a huge rock, on which a dragon and a horse were carved in relief. When the spring water rises and the rock is submerged, wheezing sounds are heard; when the water falls, the carved horse at the bottom of the pool exposes its back, and the clatters of horse hoofs emanate from the pool. According to our local friend, even though the spring water rises and ebbs several times irregularly every day, only lucky people are able to see this rock at the bottom of the pool.

Believing we belonged to the lucky ones, we waited by the pool. Several times we lost our patience and turned to leave when someone shouted: "There, the tide is changing!" Each time we went back and

waited. But two hours had passed, and no tide had been seen and no clatter of hoofs had been heard. We finally left the spring in dismay.

On our way back, our friend felt very sorry for us. "It's a pity you didn't see it," he said. "Among the six major intermittent springs in



China this is the first open to tourists. There are 15 springs of such kind in the whole world, but only this White Horse Spring produces the clattering sound of horse hoofs that are most pleasing to the ear...." His remarks raised even more regret in my heart.





Colourful, Delicious Food of Xi'an

Photos by Shi Baoxiu Article by Li Bing

While visitors to Xi'an are surprised by the numerous historical sites and cultural relics of this ancient capital, they are also deeply impressed by the characteristic local food. First of all, Xi'an dishes are served in large portions; second, they are generally inexpensive; third, there are too many varieties to try them all during one trip.

Old Family-run Restaurants

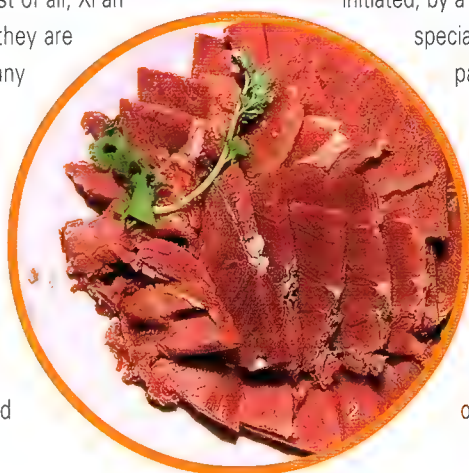
On the food street near the Bell and Drum Towers, restaurants and food stalls stretch several hundred metres, offering the best chance to taste typical Xi'an dishes and snacks.

In downtown Xi'an, one can easily find

signboards like these: Sun Family Paomo, Old Ma Family Mutton, Old Liu Family Hulutou.... Obviously, these restaurants are run, or were initiated, by a family with such a surname. Each one offers a

speciality cooked with a unique recipe that has been passed down from generation to generation.

Paomo, for example, is a common dish in Xi'an. *Mo* is the Xi'an-style baked bun; when the bun is served by putting small pieces of it in a bowl of mutton or beef soup, it is called *paomo*, or soaked bun. The Ma Family's paomo is widely favoured by both local residents and visitors because its soup is especially delicious, free of the strong smell of mutton or beef.



Dishes Linked with Historical Figures

In Xi'an, the capital of Northwest China's Shaanxi Province, cultural relics and historical traces can be found everywhere. While visiting a restaurant or tasting a snack, one may probably hear stories linking a certain food with a historical figure.

Nianzhipo is a shop selling cooked salted mutton. Its strange name (which literally means "the slope where the emperor's cart stopped") was said to be given after the legendary visit of Empress Dowager Cixi and Emperor Guangxu of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). In 1900, after Beijing was conquered by the army of the Eight Powers, the two top imperial rulers fled to Xi'an in their royal cart. When they passed a mutton shop on the slope in front of the Drum Tower, they smelled the lovely aroma of cooked meat. Immediately, they ordered their cart to stop, tasted the salted mutton, and praised it highly.



Dumplings of All Kinds

Defachang Restaurant is famous for its wide variety of dumplings. They are not only made of varied fillings — pork, mutton, beef, chicken, fish and vegetable, but also in different sizes and various shapes — some are even made into animals representing the 12 years of birth. The most expensive is a kind with shark's fin as its filling; the smallest is as big as a small fingertip.

Again, a story links the dumplings with the Empress Dowager. During her flight, Cixi lost her appetite. The royal cook finally created a special kind of dumpling to arouse her interest. With chicken meat as the filling, the small, pearl-like dumplings were boiled in chrysanthemum soup. The Empress Dowager liked them and ate each time three, six, or nine pieces — numbers that she believed would bring good luck. "Pearl Dumpling" has since become a traditional dish served in this restaurant.

Interestingly, diners now also link their eating of the dumplings with numbers. For example, eating one symbolises smoothness in everything;



eating two means double happiness.

Popular Food Becomes Banquet Dish

At Tongshengxiang Restaurant, an inscription in the handwriting of famous painter Huang Zhou is proudly displayed. The words "The First Heavenly Bowl" refer to the restaurant's paomo dishes,

which are always served in big bowls.

This popular food first won the favour of foreign visitors. It eventually became a must on the local dinner table for entertaining foreign VIPs; finally, in 1983, it was listed on the menu of a national banquet in Beijing. The restaurant has since become even more famous.

1. Huanggui persimmon cake is a famous snack found on the Muslim Food Street near the Drum Tower. It uses persimmons produced in Lintong and wheat flour as the main ingredients, with rock sugar, chestnuts and sweet osmanthus flowers as the filling. The baked cake is tender and delicious inside and crispy outside.
2. The cooked salted mutton of Nianzhipo is said to have attracted the Empress Dowager Cixi and Emperor Guangxu during their flight from Beijing.
3. To eating paomo, you tear the bread into small pieces and soak them in the beef or mutton soup. (by Wu Xuezhong)
4. Tongshengxiang Restaurant, famous for its paomo, has a history of over 100 years.
5. A dumpling banquet at Defachang Restaurant is a feast for both the mouth and the eyes. (by Wu Xuezhong)





Into the Land of the Dong

Photos by Zhang Yan Article by Ke Yin

1. This wind and rain bridge at Chengyang is listed as one of the three most outstanding ancient bridges in China. (by Xie Guanghui)

2. Head gear and costumes of Dong women (by Zhang Yan)

3. Mother and son (by Zhang Yan)

4. Dong women displaying their home-made batik (by Chan Yat Nin)

The Dong, an ethnic minority of more than 1.5 million people, have traditionally resided in border areas of Guangxi, Guizhou and Hunan in Southwest China. For centuries, they have been engaged in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting.

They are divided into the Northern and Southern Dong, each speaking a different dialect and wearing different costumes. The Northern Dong live in Guizhou Province while the Southern Dong are found mostly in the Sanjiang area of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Chengyang in Sanjiang in particular not only boasts a unique lifestyle and scenery, but is known for the special Dong architectural wonder called the "wind and rain bridge".

Wind and Rain Bridges

By northbound train, it is 200 kilometres from the city of Liuzhou to the seat of Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County. Then, a bus continues the journey to the north to Chengyang.

It is a land of green mountains and clear waters, ancient paths, bridges, pavilions, and roads paved with stone slabs all along the modern highway.

The wind and rain bridges – unique, Dong-style covered bridges – span rivers and streams where clear waters flow. According to one legend, a long, long time ago people crossed the rivers on large fir logs placed across the water surface. One day, as a young couple were crossing a river, a sudden wind swept up from the river bed, carrying the young lady away. It was the crab monster in the river, who had fallen in love with her. As the young man cried sorrowfully by the river, a multicoloured dragon in the water rescued the lady by killing the crab monster. To remember the dragon, people replaced the log bridge with a covered one – the "wind and rain bridge".

Images of the multicoloured dragon were carved on the bridge pillars, and it was given the name the "Dragon-Return Bridge". Being a good place to take shelter from wind or rain, people later referred to them as wind and rain bridges.



Though varying in size, all wind and rain bridges are of solid wood construction in graceful architectural style. Of all the Dong-style bridges, the one on the Linxi River at Chengyang is the most noteworthy.

Standing on four piers and forming five arches, this bridge is 64.6 metres long. Rows of logs are laid on top of stone piers and covered with wooden planks, over which roofs and side railings are built. Benches are placed inside. The entire structure is built of fir securely joined with tenons and mortises.

Inside, rows of wooden columns support wooden beams holding a roof of grey tiles and white eaves. What deserves special mention is that five pavilions with upturned eaves stand atop the bridge, evenly-spaced. The two at either end are in the shape of a

palace, while the three in the middle resemble pagodas, each of them being crowned with a red gourd-shaped structure, symbolising good luck. On each section of the roof ridge between the pavilions are four upside-down gourd- and turtle-shaped structures. There are also 38 "immortal birds", each standing on an eave point; on the eave edges, are paintings with a wide variety of ethnic minority-style patterns. It is said that it took the local people 10 years to complete the bridge in 1916.

Drum Towers — Centres of Social Activities

No matter which village you walk into,



the first thing to meet your eye is inevitably a drum tower, resembling either a magnificent pavilion or an exquisite pagoda. Despite their great size, no drum tower is ever built with iron nails. Like the wind and rain bridges, they are built of fir, and neatly connected by tenons and mortises.

The lower part of a drum tower is a square hall of 35-80 square metres. On one side of the hall, there is always a large drum with an ox-hide surface; at the centre of the hall is a fireplace with wooden planks and railings around the four sides. Furnished with benches, a tower hall usually can accommodate a gathering of 100 to 200 people.

In fact, the drum tower is the centre of social activities for the Dong people. Once the drum is beaten, people will gather at the tower. From the first to the seventh day of every Spring Festival, besides visiting each other, the Dong also come to the brightly-lit-up tower to sing together, enlivening the holiday

atmosphere. Beginning with the winter solstice in late December, people assemble at the tower to learn new songs. Young people cut golden bamboo on the mountain and bring them to the tower. They invite masters to teach them how to split the bamboo to make bamboo-pipes of various sizes.

During the Bamboo-Pipe Festival, young people from nearby villages come to sing and dance together beside the drum tower. The drum tower is also a



meeting place for young people.

Being a Guest in a Dong Home

The houses of the Dong are built of timber and bark from fir trees. The upper storey is the living quarters and the lower ground is reserved for animals. During the hunting season, the men go up to the mountains to look for game. According to tradition, hunters always share their catch with their companions.

The Dong are a hospitable people who greet visitors with "oil tea". To make it, the host will first pour the oil into an iron pot and add glutinous rice to make puffed rice. The second step is to roast peanuts and soybeans. Next, the puffed glutinous rice is fried together with tea leaves and ordinary rice. Finally, some lukewarm water is added into the mixture, and salt is added before it is boiled again.

The oil-tea is put into a bowl, and other ingredients such as deep-fried peanuts, rice cakes, rice noodles and stir-fried pig internal organs are spread on top of the soup. While the guest is having tea, the host will



1. A drum tower is the venue for all village activities. (by Zhang Xianwen)
2. A dance depicting the Dong wedding - Picking the Bride (by Chan Yat Nin)
3. The 3rd day of the 3rd lunar month is a day for grand gathering. (by Zhang Yan)
4. Making oil-tea to entertain guests (by Zhang Yan)
5. Making brocade (by Zhang Xiaolin)
6. "Parading the governor" is a traditional form of merry-making to celebrate the Spring Festival. (by Liu Yongtai)

firecrackers.

The Spring Festival is a time of great fanfare for the Dong, particularly in the Sanjiang area. Apart from singing and dancing, they also stage a lovely "parading the governor" game which is an occasion of great amusement.

The "governor" is carried around in a sedan chair and accompanied by his "wife" to demonstrate the pomposity of past officials, making an elaborate display when making inspection tours. The parade is obstructed by singing village girls, while other games are played and fire crackers set off.

The next day, people switch roles, and yesterday's host villagers carry their "governor" and his "wife" to stage the game in other villages.

Translated by F. Huang



keep adding more tea and ingredients into the guest's bowl, for the Dong have the rule: The host should not stop serving his guests until they put down their chopsticks.

The New Year Carnival

Of the many festivals of the Dong people, the most celebrated ones are the Spring Festival and the 3rd Day of the 3rd Month Festival. The latter, includes bamboo dancing and a competition for flowery



New Routes Erase Isolation

The Maiji Mountain in Tianshui in China's northwestern province of Gansu possesses one of the four most famous groups of grottoes in the country. Visitors travelling along the ancient Silk Road often make a side excursion to the Maiji Mountain, attracted by its grottoes. There are altogether nearly 100 grottoes chiselled out on the tall, sheer cliffs. The huge Buddha statue in the open presents a formidable image.

Now the Tianshui Tourism Bureau has opened up new scenic zones and built highways, making it possible to tour around and see more of the beautiful mountain.



The campsite by the lake deep in the mountain.

TRAVELS AROUND MAIJI MOUNTAIN

Photos & article by Shi Baoxiu

Cultural Heritage List Candidate

The Maiji Mountain Grottoes boast the most well-preserved Buddhist statues in both posture and colour of all the four of China's most famous Buddhist grottoes. One reason is that they are nestled deep in the Qinling Mountains on extremely precipitous mountain cliffs. Overhanging wooden stairways protruding from the cliffs provide the only path for tourists. Some years ago United Nations officials came to evaluate it as a possible candidate for the UN World Cultural Heritage list. Unfortunately the grottoes were undergoing major renovations and the cultural relics administration refused any photo-taking in fear that news

of the repairs would attract thieves. Otherwise, Maiji Mountain Grottoes could have been listed as were the Dunhuang Grottoes in northern Gansu.

Ancient Temples in the Mountain

Half-way along the north-bound highway around the Maiji Mountain is the recently-developed Xianrenya (Immortal Cliffs) Scenic Zone. It consists of east, west and south cliffs and six temple courtyards. Five hills exhibit their distinct gracefulness, and zigzagging paths snake their way deep into the woods. In the middle of the hills is a lake, where a campsite with tents spreading on the waterside constitutes a lovers' holiday resort.

The temples possess some well-protected Buddha sculptures tucked under some of the most sheer cliffs. There is also a kind of black pine not seen elsewhere, known as "the giant panda of pines", which is under the first-degree state protection.

At the entrance of the valley is a mountain villa where houses in ancient architectural styles are completely furnished with modern facilities at bargain rates.

A New Holy Ground of Buddhism

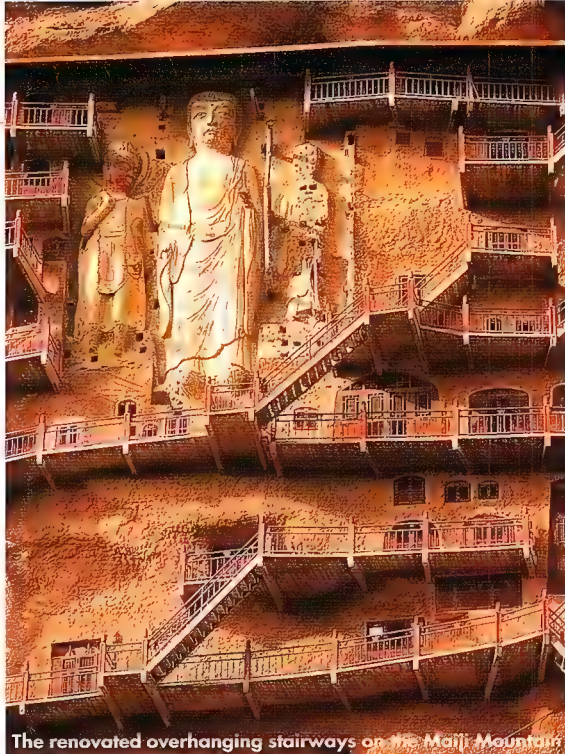
Further northeast is a new Buddhist site under busy construction. The main temple hall and the Five-hundred-



Most clay sculptures at the Immortal Cliffs date back to the Song and Ming dynasties.



Temple buildings at the Immortal Cliffs are mostly nestled under sheer cliffs.



The renovated overhanging stairways on the Maiji Mountain

arhat Hall have already been completed. The abbot monk Hai Zheng, originally a prominent Buddhist abbot at Mount Wutai, came here because he found that the hills and waters at the Maiji Mountain have a particularly sacred attraction. Still further east at Shimen (Stone Gate) Hill are a group of unusual, solitary peaks resembling the Huangshan Mountain peaks in Anhui Province. Strange trees grow on these peaks amid traces of small ancient Taoist temples located in precarious positions.

Hot Springs Bliss

On the return route to Tianshui is the Jiezi Hot Springs.

The Hot Springs Villa here is exquisitely built with waterside pavilions and towers in traditional Chinese architectural style. Each room, with four beds, has its own hot spring bath. One can spend the night here for 40 yuan per person or just take a hot spring bath for 20 yuan per hour.

Opposite the river, the Hot Springs Holiday Village is a more trendy place with Japanese-style baths, sauna rooms, bucket bath facilities and luxury bath chambers.

Translated by F. Huang



Japanese style bath at the Hot Springs Holiday Village



The Hot Springs Villa attracts visitors with good rates and ancient style architecture

Tips for the Traveller

Local Delicacies

Buckwheat cake: A high starch food consisting of mainly flour, served with a sauce of vinegar, soya sauce, mustard, sesame paste, hot chili oil and garlic. Its superb taste has won it the reputation as the "No. 1 Delicacy of Tianshui".

Lard cake: This Tianshui-style cake, filled with pork fat, baked, fried and then roasted again, provides a crispy and tasty snack.



Tianshui produces a wide range of fruits.

Arts and Crafts

Soft wood paintings: These are three-dimensional "paintings" created with oak tree bark using pasting and inlaying techniques.

Carved lacquer wares: Exquisitely made lacquer wares and large-size screens.

Silk carpets: Floor carpets and tapestries with varied patterns made of silk.

Mandarin Duck jade wares: Produced in Wushan of Tianshui, they range from illuminating wine cups and tea cups to pen holders and bracelets.

Transport

There are two springboards to Tianshui: Lanzhou and Xi'an. Trains are the most convenient and the quickest means of travel.

Over 20 tourist buses with guides run from Qincheng District or Tianshui Railway Station to the Maiji Mountain and surrounding scenic spots at a cost of 20 yuan per person. To and from the Maiji Mountain by rented van is 80 yuan and by a taxi 100 to 120 yuan.

Accommodation

Hotels in Tianshui:

Asia-Pacific Hotel: rates at 200 to 500 yuan. Telephone: (938) 2727340

Maijishan Grand Hotel: rates at 170 to 500 yuan. Telephone: (938) 2722277

Longlin Hotel: rates at 96 to 300 yuan. Telephone: (938) 2735296

Xihuang Hotel: rates at 100 to 200 yuan. Telephone: (938) 2734700

Mountain villas in the scenic zones:

Maiji Mountain Villa: 90 yuan. Telephone: (938) 281603

Immortal Cliffs Mountain Villa: 130 yuan. Telephone: (938) 2816031

Suggested Itineraries

One-day trip: Start out early in the morning to the Maiji Mountain, then go to the Immortal Cliffs Scenic Zone, Jiezi Hot Springs, Fu Xi Temple in the city district and shop in the evening.

Two-day trip: Visit the Shimen Hill and the new Buddhist temple first, then the Immortal Cliffs and stay overnight at a mountain villa. Next day, tour the Maiji Mountain and have a wild game lunch at the Maiji Mountain Villa. Then have a hot springs bath, visit the Fu Xi Temple and the Jade Spring Monastery, and shop before evening departure.

Three-day trip: On the third day, see the grottoes at the Elephant Hill in Gangu and the Water Curtain Cave in Wushan, leaving by train from either Wushan or Tianshui.





A photo taken by moving parallel with the subject

CREATING THE SENSE OF **MOBILITY**

Photos & article by Huang Yanhong

During a trip, you may wish to take photos of moving things or people in action as well as still natural scenes. A photo with the sense of mobility can be more vivid and expressive. To enhance the enjoyment of your tour, read on about taking such kinds of pictures.

1 USING SLOW SHUTTER AND FLASH

When the light is too dim, you need a flash. In such cases, you should set the aperture and the flash appropriately so that they match. Usually, you can shoot a clear picture as long as the camera shutter works co-ordinately with the aperture and flash.

Under such circumstances, if you use a slow shutter, there will be more than one exposure. A clear picture of your subject will be first left on the film, but the blurred image of the moving thing or scene will be added too. The virtual and real images, which blend stillness and mobility, will create a special effect. You should not set the aperture too large, otherwise the shadow of the virtual image will be too obvious and the effect of the picture as a whole will be spoiled.



Using a flash to create an unusual effect

2 STABILISING THE CAMERA

It may happen that the subject is moving at high speed in dim light and you lack a flash. Obviously, it is difficult to shoot clear human figures. In such a situation, the best thing to do is hold your camera steadily, or use a tripod, to take a clear picture of the background, leaving the moving subjects rolling on in virtual images. This method usually creates an artistic effect and is suitable for taking photos of a night market or a party.



Taking a clear picture of the background (by Li Dan)

3 MOVING WITH THE SUBJECT

This method is the opposite of the above. By moving with the subject, you can get the figures totally or partially clear, leaving the background blurred. It is often used for taking photos of fascinating folk customs, such as horse racing and bull fighting. The key to success is to set the right shutter speed and to click your camera properly while you are advancing parallel with the moving subject. Also, you should not stop moving immediately after the clicking of the shutter. Of course, it is better to make several tries to guarantee success.



A photo taken on a bus passing through a tunnel

4 TRYING A NEW METHOD

This is a new method for trial, so you should control the number of your clicks to avoid waste.

While you are in the middle of an activity, take the photo, using a slow shutter speed. Usually, good photos cannot be taken in this way. However, under certain circumstances, some unexpected and interesting results may be created. The photo of a Hong Kong tunnel, for example, was taken from a bus with a slow shutter speed. In an abstract way, it reflects the busy traffic of a metropolis.



A night scene taken with a tripod



One Day in Nanjing

Photos and article by Pierre Wong

My dream is to travel across the whole of China. The first leg of my trek has taken me through eight provinces and has allowed me to visit numerous cities. The most memorable city so far has been Nanjing, the capital of Jiangsu Province.

Wide tree-lined roads, decent urban planning, relatively good traffic conditions and prosperity all come to mind when I think of Nanjing. Historically, Nanjing has been in existence for over 2,000 years. Throughout history it has had the honour of being the country's capital for numerous dynasties, and enjoyed its golden years during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). The remains of a stone wall, originally 33 kilometres long and straddling the natural contours of the land, and a moat on the outskirts, lend proof to this point.

I had signed up for a local one-day tour and our first stop was the Fuzimiao (Confucius Temple). We did not, however, visit the temple itself. The district around the temple, which also goes by the name of Ten Miles of Qinhuai, was already a prosperous commercial and

entertainment centre back in the Ming and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties stretching along the banks of the Qinhuai River. It is still now a lively area of market alleyways, restaurants, teahouses and snackbars.



The Solemn Mausoleum of Dr. Sun Yat-sen

Next on our tour was the final resting place of one of the most famous Cantonese, the grandfather of China's democratic revolutionaries, Dr. Sun Yat-sen. The path leading to Dr. Sun's mausoleum is lined with ginkgo trees, and upon reaching the mausoleum one is faced with the daunting task of scaling a flight of 392 steps, each step representing one million Chinese people at the time of his death.

According to the tour guide, the Soviets had presented the widow, Madame Soong, with a crystal coffin. However, it was delayed during transportation, so it was not used and is now displayed in the memorial hall at the Western Hills in Beijing. Apparently a lot of visitors from Taiwan make the pilgrimage and invariably ask the same question: "Is Dr. Sun really buried in Nanjing?" According to our good tour guide, there is no doubt. When the Kuomintang retreated to Taiwan in 1949, General Chiang Kai-shek had consulted his corps of engineers, but was told that Dr. Sun's body was buried beneath six metres of concrete and any attempt at drilling, blasting or removing the body would undoubtedly damage it. The general had to give up the idea of moving the body with him to Taiwan.

As a son of Guangdong, I felt it my utmost duty to pay respect to this great hero. An unfortunate incident, however, marred this solemn occasion. I caught a rascal spitting in the immediate vicinity. I drew up my full stature of 1.8 metres and berated him in the most severe manner possible. "Is this how you pay respect to Dr. Sun? By spitting?" I asked him face to face.

Adjacent to the mausoleum are the Wuliang Dian (Beamless Hall) and the Linggu Temple. Beamless Hall used to be a Buddhist shrine, but General Chiang, in demonstration of his newly converted Christian faith, turned it into a memorial hall for fallen Kuomintang heroes. The general's conversion was part of an agreement in order to win Madame Soong Mei-ling's hand in marriage. The name "Beamless" is attributed to the architectural oddity that the construction does not use a single beam. The whole structure is made of overlapping bricks, and the walls are some four metres thick.

After lunch, we were taken to the President's Office in the downtown area. Dr. Sun had spent four months administering the country from these humble surroundings. It is now a museum and a lot of historic photographs and furniture are displayed. Apparently, the museum was used recently as a backdrop for a television series.

English Square: A Place for Students

Next stop was Xuanwu Lake, a five-square-kilometre body of water smack in the middle of the city. We were driven around the lake and also taken to a fresh water pearl factory outlet. These shopping



excursions are getting increasingly frequent and prevalent amount local tours. I routinely skip these side shows and take the opportunity to do some photography or take a rest instead. On the way to our next destination, the guide pointed out the "English Square" to us. It seems that every Saturday, nearby university students, English learners and interested people

congregate in the square to practise their English.

The last on our itinerary was the awe-inspiring Changjiang Bridge. The bridge was supposed to be built by Soviet experts; however, Sino-Soviet relations entered an unpleasant chapter in the turbulent 1960s and all Soviet experts were recalled, leaving many unfinished projects behind. The Chinese leadership called for Chinese engineers to finish the project using Chinese technology and know-how. As a result, the double-decker bridge with a 1,577-metre-long roadway on top and a railway below, which straddles the Yangtse River today, is a source of pride for all Chinese. At the bottom of one of the bridge towers, there is a small exhibition hall that contains a solitary statue of Mao Zedong issuing forth his signature wave, serving perhaps as a reminder of the heady days of yesteryear.



1. The magnificent Yangtse River Bridge at Nanjing
2. The solemn mausoleum of Dr. Sun Yat-sen
3. The Linggu Temple, originally built in the sixth century
4. A lively market place outside the Confucius Temple

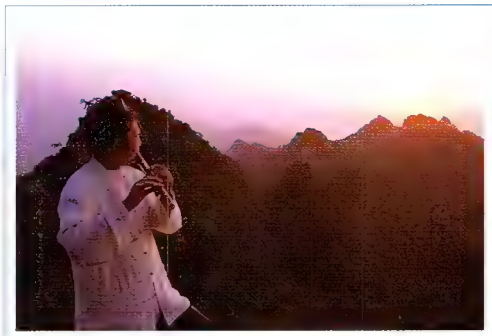
Tips for the Traveller:

It is easiest to join a tour group organised by hotels, and many hotels in Nanjing, including two-star rated, offer this kind of service.

▼ Cost of one-day tour: 120 yuan

▼ Hotel: Nanjing Central Hotel, 2-star, standard double room 220 yuan per night.

by Xie Guanghui

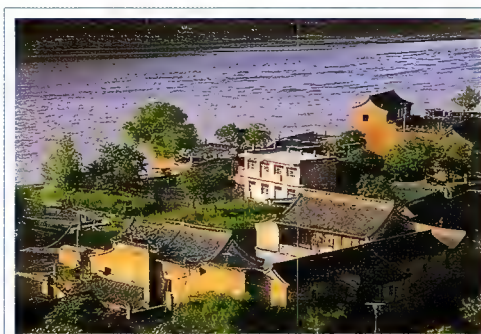


Taoism is the only major religion that originated in China, and the Taoist martial art is world famous for its unique characteristics. Our reports will take you to **Mount Wudang**, to see its charming peaks, ancient temples and floating clouds, also to explore the

secret of the Taoist kungfu. There is also the story of a HK doctor who lead his family of 14 to Mt. Wudang to learn martial arts.

Jikou, a quiet town situated by the Yellow River, was a busy, prosperous port a century ago. It served as a major transportation hub between the Central Plains and the Northwest.

by Shan Xiaogang



by Huang Yanhong



The **Four Girls Mountain** is said to have been formed from four beautiful women. Our reporter will lead you to unveil its mystery.

An American veteran pilot came back to China to look for **a lost World War II aircraft**, and amazingly, he found it in the mountains of Yunnan Province.

by Li Xu



Touring Qingdao' CD-ROM



Qingdao is a beautiful port city on the Jiaodong Peninsula in East China's Shandong Province. The bright blue ocean and the layer upon layer of mountains make it a charming scenic resort. In its old city centre, the red roofs of the European-architectural buildings emerge amid green trees, showing their eternal beauty; in the new development area, skyscrapers rise with an increasing number, seemingly to be competing for height and might with one another.

Qingdao is a lovely cultural city. In its urban areas and rural outskirts there are numerous museums, historical sites, relics and scenic spots. The beautiful Mount Laoshan is one example.

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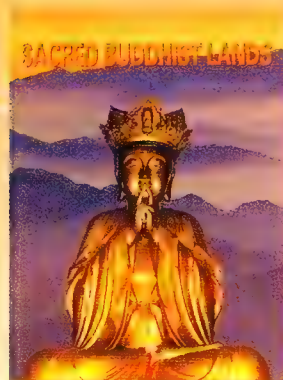
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Books on Attractive Subjects

Famous Chinese Mountains



Sacred Buddhist Lands

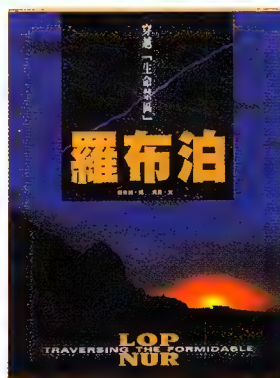
Buddhism in China is inevitably linked with some of the country's best known mountains. Since long ago, there has been a trend to build temples in these mountains for believers to worship, and for monks and nuns to study and preach Buddhism. This book introduces to you the four most important Buddhist lands in China: Wutai Mountain, Jiuhua Mountain, Putuo Mountain and Emei Mountain. In addition, the most famous grottoes scattered in the vast territory of China, featuring an abundance of brilliant Buddhist art, are also listed. These include the grottoes in Dunhuang, Yungang, Longmen and Mount Maiji.



The Five Sacred Mountains and the Yellow Mountain

Among the numerous high mountains in China, only five are called *yue*, meaning huge and magnificent mountains. Legend has it that when Pangu, the mythical hero who created the sky and the earth, died, he changed the five sections of his body into distinguished mountains: Mount Tai in the east, Mount Songshan in Central China, Mount Hengshan in the north, Mount Hengshan (a different character in Chinese) in the south, and Mount Huashan in the north.

Huangshan (Yellow) Mountain has absorbed all the charm of Mother Nature. Its picturesque peaks, floating clouds and strange ancient pines attract many travellers.



Beautiful Scenery

Traversing the Formidable Lop Nur

The Lop Nur located in the heart of the Tarim Basin in North West China's Xinjiang is a vast area of desert. Until the 1950s, a big lake existed there, and during the ancient times, the area was the cultural and business centre on the Silk Road. Since the ruins of the ancient Loulan State were found by Swedish geologist and explorer, Sven Hedin, in the early days of this century, Lop Nur has become an attractive target for explorers, historians and travellers across the world. This book shows the scenes of the current "land of death", displays the ruins and cultural relics discovered there and explores the mystery of its formidability.

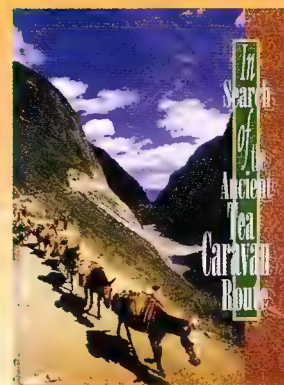
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Xinjiang in Changing Seasons

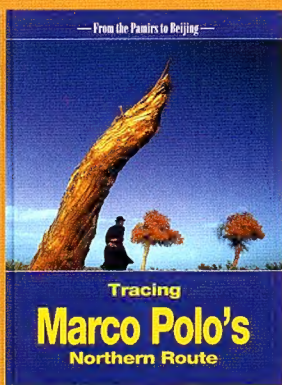
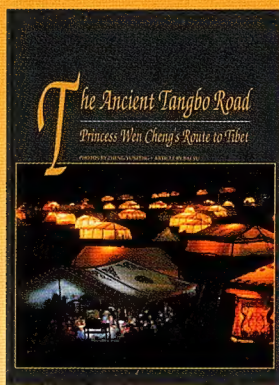
This is an album of the selected photos of Sun Jiabin, a famous photographer who has spent more than 20 years in Xinjiang, travelling across the vast land, taking pictures of all the four seasons and the colourful customs of the ethnic minority groups living there. Xinjiang is a land of wonders. In winter, there are the foggy mornings with fantastic rimes, and ideal ski grounds; in spring, the pasturelands are dominated by a riot of colourful wild flowers; summer is a joyful season with many festival activities held on the grasslands, such as the Nadam and the Turpan Grape Festival; autumn is the golden season to travel the Kanas Lake and the Altay area.

Historical Sites ..



In Search of the Ancient Tea Caravan Route

Starting from Xishuangbanna in Yunnan, passing through the border areas between China and Myanmar, India, Nepal and Sikkim, to reach Tibet, this arduous route was used in ancient times for tea trading. Ancient customs and traces of history remain along the road. The various ethnic groups along the trail — the Blang, Jinuo, Hani, Va, Miao, Yi, Hui, Bai, Naxi, Tibetan and Han — all drink tea from the same source, but each in their unique style. Tea has been serving as the linkage between the different cultures. The tropical and subtropical climate with many rainforests add fun as well as difficulties to the journey on this ancient route.



The Ancient Tangbo Road

This was the road linking the Tang capital Chang'an (today's Xi'an) and Luoxie (today's Lhasa), capital of the ancient Tubo Kingdom. Along this trail, Princess Wencheng of the Tang Dynasty journeyed to Lhasa to marry the Tubo king, Songtsan Gambo. There are magnificent mountains, and charming rivers and lakes, such as the Bayan Har and Tanggula mountains, the Yellow and Yangtse rivers and Qinghai Lake.

Tracing Marco Polo's Northern Route

Due to the southerly movement of the deserts and rivers changing course, the original route that Marco Polo had followed no longer exists. However, on a journey from Pamirs to Beijing one can reflect on how the Italian traveller managed it 700 years ago. One will pass through the vast territory in Northwest and North China, and also meet many different ethnic groups.

The Land of the Three Kingdoms

By visiting the historical sites of the Three Kingdoms in the provinces of Henan, Hubei, Sichuan, Shaanxi and Gansu, you can admire the landscapes and also learn the history and legendary stories of a period 1,600 years ago. This book is a worthy collection for historians and Three Kingdoms buffs.

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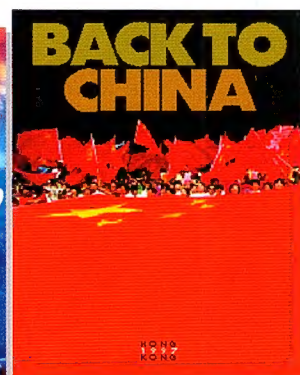
Photography Albums

Images of Hong Kong by Ten Photographers

The year 1997 had a great impact on the nation, on Hong Kong, and on everyone living in Hong Kong. The photos by these famous photographers, including Yau Leung, Leong Ka Tai, Alfred Kao and Wang Miao, are in fact their impressions of Hong Kong in 1997. Through the photo works, one can also see the unique styles of each of the photographers.

Back to China, Hong Kong 1997

On July 1, 1997 Hong Kong returned to China. The photos selected cover the events during the 48 hours from 0:00 June 30 to 24:00 July 1, from the handover ceremony in Hong Kong to places throughout the country. They faithfully reflect the jubilant celebrations, and also depict Hong Kong's smooth transition.



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This is another one of the largest tourist centres established by China Travel Service (Holdings) H.K.Ltd. in the Shenzhen Overseas Chinese Town. Covering an area of 480,000 sq.m., it adjoins Splendid China and China Folk Culture Villages as well. Here we've assembled the marvellous sights and sites of historical interest in the world, the ancient and modern natural landscapes and attractions as well as dwelling houses and celebrated sculptures, etc., totalling 118 scenic spots. Among them are the world-famous Eiffel Tower of France, the Buckingham Palace of Britain, the Pyramid of Egypt, the Grand Canyon of America, the waterside villages in South-East Asia and Europe-style dwelling houses, etc.

Apart from folklore and theatrical performances in the scenic centre, tourists can easily get access to different means of traffic such as the elevated single-track car with a circular route, electromobile, Europe-style ancient carriage, Gypsy caravan, old-fashioned car, etc. And in the comprehensive service area, we cater the delicacies of season, and handicrafts and souvenirs with consummate skills of various countries, which await your choice. What's more, you may even find entertainment on the Carnival Night when teams of artists parade before you by presenting the delightful programmes of multi-national art and culture and customs and the gigantic party of the epic of dance and music Making of century.

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